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THE AMERICAN PUBLIC LIBRARY  
AND THE  
DIFFUSION OF KNOWLEDGE





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THE  
AMERICAN PUBLIC LIBRARY  
AND THE  
DIFFUSION OF KNOWLEDGE

BY  
WILLIAM S. LEARNED  
OF THE STAFF OF THE CARNEGIE FOUNDATION  
FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF TEACHING

NEW YORK  
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## INTRODUCTION

**D**URING his incumbency as Acting President of the Carnegie Corporation from 1921 to 1923, Dr. Henry S. Pritchett brought to his aid in the study of the affairs of the Corporation, Dr. William S. Learned, his associate on the staff of the Carnegie Foundation. Dr. Learned gave particular consideration to library problems, and prepared a memorandum giving the fruits of his study in this field. This memorandum was written for office use, with no thought of publication, and represents a personal point of view and not an official one. It seemed nevertheless to the Trustees of the Corporation to be so interesting and stimulating a presentation as to deserve a larger audience.

FREDERICK P. KEPPEL,

*President*

*The Carnegie Corporation of New York.*

*June 21, 1924.*



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## THE DIFFUSION OF KNOWLEDGE



# I

## THE DIFFUSION OF KNOWLEDGE

*" . . . To promote the advancement and diffusion of knowledge and understanding among the people of the United States."* CHARTER OF THE CARNEGIE CORPORATION.

TO bring about the discovery, formulation, and diffusion of true and useful ideas is the charter purpose of the Carnegie Corporation. This was considered by its founder to be the fundamental method of human progress. Indeed, most of those who believe intelligently in a progressive civilization probably depend largely upon this threefold process for its continuous achievement. A clear appreciation of what is implied in the different features of the operation is therefore of great importance to those who would consciously promote human welfare.

The distinction between discovery and spread, between "advancement" and "diffusion" of ideas, is clear, but it is often largely a matter of one's social philosophy or temperament as to which is considered to be of the greater importance. These two great processes of civilization are not mutually antagonistic. Rather, they are complementary, for accurate knowledge thoroughly diffused is, in the long run, the best possible preparation for fresh discovery. Nevertheless, the two functions are commonly pursued with a certain difference in temper owing to differing points of view. Some who have been most anxious to discover new truth have been most indifferent to its propagation, while others who have zealously undertaken to instruct mankind have appeared to be most careless as to the correctness of their gospels. The two processes must proceed together.

### 1. DIFFICULTIES IN DIFFUSING KNOWLEDGE

Of the functions just indicated, those of formulation and diffusion of knowledge are in many respects the more difficult. Given a skilful investigator and the necessary facilities, research proceeds; most of the perplexing human factors are eliminated. The average laboratory man when sufficiently endowed desires chiefly to be let alone.

Diffusion is another matter. Knowledge, however important, must be prepared in a great variety of ways for a great variety of minds, or it fails to take hold. The child, the adolescent, the adult, the expert, the layman, the wise, and the foolish—each brings to it his own peculiar back-

ground and reaction, which must be anticipated and taken advantage of if knowledge is to function successfully in his case. The extraordinary variety of recent attempts to set forth the Theory of Relativity illustrates this fact. Professor Einstein irritated the pride and challenged the pedagogy of the American mind when he announced that few could understand his conception, and forthwith there appeared a flood of books and monographs, articles in newspapers and periodicals, and even versions for the screen, each professing to make it simpler than the last, and most of them aimed at the "average man." When diffusion is left to itself each individual appropriates such elements as chance to fit him; when, on the other hand, it is made a positive, conscious process, its efforts at adaptation may not cease until the knowledge functions correctly in the mind of the recipient. To bring this about requires extensive organization, intelligently maintained and skilfully directed.

Moreover, the systematic diffusion of knowledge encounters no inconsiderable social obstacles. Knowledge brings with it fundamental and far-reaching changes in conduct, often of an unexpected and sometimes of an apparently undesirable nature, especially in certain transitional stages. With some classes of adults, as with children, a little knowledge is a dangerous thing. Those who spread ideas must be willing to have things changed as a result of their efforts, and not all are ready to face the contingency that such changes may be partial and not wholly to their liking.

As is the case, too, with other human institutions, agencies that exist for diffusing knowledge tend to become perfunctory and conventional, and unless continually revitalized, they gradually cease to deal with the knowledge that is most important or else pervert its distribution.

Thus to engineer the preparation and successful diffusion of the most important knowledge is a task of great delicacy, while it is at the same time perhaps the most significant social task in which a community may engage.

## 2. TYPES OF KNOWLEDGE REQUIRING TREATMENT

The machinery for the spread of knowledge and understanding among the people of a community exhibits a remarkable variety of origin and character. From the earliest tribal conclaves set up in order to facilitate military, religious, or political control, to the modern newspaper, advertising agency, or university, the uniform object has been to secure

solidarity of thought and action through the general inculcation of a set of common ideas. The ways of going about this have been diverse in the extreme, and are so to-day, except that as certain bodies of knowledge, desirable from one point of view or another, have emerged, they have been organized into formal disciplines primarily intended for the young, and schools, from kindergarten to professional, are the result.

Ignoring transitional forms, three different types of "knowledge" may be broadly distinguished as requiring separate treatment.

#### A. "News"

The first type is essentially "news"—the flood of ephemeral print out of which is selected the limited group of facts that orients for each his daily life. The newspapers and periodicals possess this field, and furnish as excellent models of diffusion in their well-nigh universal contacts, as of qualitative bedlam in their ideas. Everything that possesses conceivable "news value" is pitched into the furnace of publicity. There public opinion treats and reduces it, drawing off at last for permanent use a product dependent upon the quality and acuteness of its own insight. Within necessary limits a scientific news service like that of the Associated Press may develop to great perfection, and there is much evidence of progress through sheer commercial enterprise and competition. Most communities will doubtless leave this type of knowledge to commercial exploitation, although an endowed establishment permitting a freer, abler, and more selective report of current affairs than popular advertising can usually be made to support is among the dreams of many a journalist.

#### B. *Knowledge, other than News, Available in Print*

The second and more substantial type of knowledge is the whole range of verified scientific fact, matured judgment, and products of the constructive imagination generally incorporated into books. This field includes nearly all that is clearly known and much of the best that has been thought and felt by man. Out of it comes the preparation and suggestion for each step by which the individual, and with him the race, advances; the comfort, criticism, and inspiration whereby he holds his ground and maintains his confidence. Its contents should be promptly and easily accessible to every degree of intelligence in a form that commends itself for immediate appropriation, if the process of universal education is to become a practical reality.

*(1) Instruction for Youth*

As already observed, the formal, active administration of a part of this knowledge has been developed thus far almost solely for the young. For childhood, youth, and earliest maturity such material as intellectual leaders have deemed essential has been arranged according to the age and degree of advancement of the pupil; and it has been sought thus to erect a sort of platform on the crest of past achievements whence the new generation may begin its flight. The obviously specialized requirements of immature minds, the personal desire to give youth the best possible start, and the deep-seated belief that social welfare depends upon so doing, sufficiently explain these activities.

*(2) Lack of Provision for the Adult*

Yet with all this elaborate and boasted provision for the wholesale instruction of youth, at a cost which constitutes much the largest single item in expenditure from the common funds, the conscious and systematic growth in knowledge of the adult community has been almost overlooked. School graduates at every stage have listened to the solemn declaration that their education "has just begun," yet aside from the lessons of experience and the meagre gleanings from desultory reading, the vast majority have not consciously continued a process which the school has tacitly assumed to be its own exclusive province.

Of course, a very great amount of so-called adult education is now proceeding at every turn. There are books and periodicals in profusion; the great American "lecture" habit is still tenacious; universities offer numberless correspondence and extension opportunities, while the efforts of religious groups, "Chautauquas," women's clubs, workingmen's associations, community forums, and similar undertakings seem to indicate a feverish intellectual activity.

While commendable in spirit, much of this activity lacks purpose, and the greater portion of it, certainly, lacks the cumulative sequence necessary to give it significant and lasting value. A vague ambition or sheer boredom in face of mental idleness impels many to "take up" year after year what proves to be an unrelated series of ill-chosen fragments of study offered without alternative and really well suited to but few of the participants. Made up on a democratic basis, the group usually includes such wide extremes of ability and preparation as to rob the course of genuine pertinence for any, and is often held together, if at all, by social rather than by intellectual considerations.

Exception should be made of students, teachers, and others engaged professionally in intellectual pursuits, who, as in extension courses, are making headway in a planned and ordered scheme of study. This is essentially school work.

In other words, the American adult is not generally trained, as in some schools pupils of the upper elementary grades are trained, in the technique indispensable to self-education, namely, the getting of ideas independently from books. Furthermore, he has on leaving school no clear conception of a curriculum in all or any branches of learning whereby, on following a definite sequence of ideas contained in books, he may arrive at a mature comprehension of that field. And, finally, there is no institution available in which he properly feels at home, where the existence of such a curriculum, the manner of its mastery, and the tools required in the process are attractively set forth in appropriate terms. A good college catalogue, supplemented by personal advice and suggestion at the institution, may accomplish this in a limited number of fields for a very small and select class of young persons; otherwise, with rare exceptions, it does not exist.

### *(3) New Demands for an Organization of Knowledge for Adult Use*

There are everywhere indications that our American society is on the eve of a much more thoroughgoing organization of its intelligence service than has hitherto been attempted, and this too, primarily, though not exclusively, in the interests of adults. The array of real and pseudo-educational endeavors just cited — a list that might be greatly extended — is evidence enough that the school and college have long since burst their walls and overflowed, carrying their methods and scholastic content into conditions of a quite different nature from those under which their procedure originated. Clearly, the sort of thing that school and college have hitherto been supposed to represent is in great general demand. The acquisition of orderly and trustworthy knowledge is no longer to be considered as an esoteric mystery locked up in an institution and available only for the young and for professional teachers; self-education with intimate relation to daily interests and activities must be recognized as a natural process of mental growth that responds to a constant and legitimate craving of the intelligent adult which continues, if properly gratified, throughout life. The existing borrowed and imperfect methods taken over from the schools have revealed this hunger and made it articulate; the present problem

is to develop a technique suited to the satisfaction of its peculiar demands.

Another form of pressure toward some rational and economical organization for distributing knowledge appears in the rapid accumulation of vast masses of information which makes imperative some means of selection, digest, or abridgment whereby any one who needs them may gain possession of essential facts without delay and without discouraging or prohibitive effort. Every form of human activity has been stimulated by the phenomenal improvement in speed and accuracy of communication, and by the consequent increase in area over which experience may now be readily assembled and compared. The result is that each separate activity, both new and old, is rapidly developing its own literature. "Selling," "advertising," "the policing of crowds," "raising money for colleges," "title-writing for motion pictures," become "sciences" almost over night, and formulate principles and procedure that must be passed along. Important and voluminous data flow in to-day from every country on earth more freely than news from the neighboring county thirty years ago. Because of this ever increasing volume and complexity of information, even the trained student finds the time required thoroughly to examine a topic in an unfamiliar field almost prohibitive, while aggressive minds not accustomed to using books are shut off from resources that might multiply their effectiveness many fold.

#### (4) *Basic Features of an Organization of Knowledge for Adults*

The ultimate nature of an organization calculated to make knowledge wieldy and appropriable for general use must of course be determined by industrious experimentation. There is, however, one principle that will certainly prove to be fundamental: *Any organization for this purpose must place its chief emphasis on such skilful adaptations as shall render the necessary information suited to the recipient and to his needs.*

Whether for adolescent or adult use, it is probably possible so to prepare and make available the knowledge that we now possess that the average rational individual can apply for information or instruction in any item that may serve his purpose, and receive it, if not as promptly, at least as satisfactorily, say, as he may purchase at a railroad station a ticket that will see him through to any destination on the line. As was discovered in many an educational enterprise during the war, it is a question chiefly of the suitable preparation and hand-



ling of information and of its skilful administration in the interests of the enquirer. This presupposes a thorough knowledge of the latter's character and requirements, and reduces the problem so nearly to that which confronts the schoolmaster that one may best turn thither for a brief elucidation.

The enormous increase in the diffusion of knowledge through schools during the past century has run parallel with the development of two kinds of discovery, and has been largely contingent upon them: One of these has been the progressive recognition and definition of mental and emotional traits, characteristics, and types of reaction in pupils of various ages, temperaments, and conditions of life; the other has been the progressive trial and testing of an almost infinite number of adaptations of important knowledge to the varied and peculiar combinations of character and mentality so disclosed. Without these enabling resources, education in schools could have reached but a small group. One has only to imagine what would result from the application of the ancient rigid curriculum and logical method in Latin grammar and formal mathematics to the pupils of a modern high school! Mental training and the discipline of clear thinking, which were formerly sought solely in the content of traditional subjects, are as widely necessary as ever, but they are needs that run parallel to the informational need, and are not to be confused with it. The sharp attention that is properly their due in no way invalidates the truth that any body of ideas is assimilated just in so far as its elements are discriminately applied in view of the particular background and mental state presented by any individual pupil.

Hence the paramount importance of skilful teaching. Indeed, the criticisms of modern schooling from top to bottom—its perfunctoriness, its machine processes, its superficiality, its frequent eagerness for spectacular variety, its tolerance of irrelevant activities, its sacrifice of serious moral standards—all of these weaknesses, wherever they exist, are traceable directly to conditions that result in neglect of the one thing needful, namely, the free, unhampered performance of a person who knows the material to be taught, and who understands and is devoted to youthful minds.

The significance of all of this school experience in dealing with the general problem of diffusing knowledge among adults is profound. The school, to be sure, has certain factitious elements presumably invented or applied in order to render the acquisition of knowledge either rapid

or economical. The constraint of school and class organization, the formalized method, the personal rivalry and emulation, the diplomas, degrees, and prizes, the family and social sanctions—all of these are extraneous to the task actually in hand, and often greatly impede it. On the contrary, the inculcation of ideas in the adult who is not in school is free from such distractions, and the problem for the community at large is in this respect greatly simplified. Here the teacher's success is measured by the extent to which each individual may be confronted with what he most desires to know in that form in which he can most completely appropriate it. The attitude of such a one is more nearly that of the precious, but usually diminutive, school group that gathers about the teacher after class to push the subject further, and shows an active hunger that brings to the teacher his best moments. The adult knows beyond question, what is still often unclear to the youth, that his satisfactions depend upon his own mastered resources, and is most appreciative of that which leads most directly to their mastery.

Because of this simplified problem the great increase in understanding of how minds operate and what materials best suit certain conditions of thought and experience has had immediate and far-reaching application in the diffusion of knowledge at large, and the effect has been striking. In journalism and commercial advertising, for example, the results achieved through an application of simple psychological principles are too numerous and too well known to require enumeration. Every form of "propaganda," whether openly direct or cunningly subtle, owes its success to the same factors. In every considerable organization having continued dealings with the public, an officer, or a whole division, is set apart for conducting the necessary "publicity"; and so important is it to know the state of mind of the individuals to be affected and to adjust the material in hand accurately to that state of mind, that the execution of this service is often held responsible for the success or failure of the enterprise.

In a less spectacular but no less pervasive fashion the same forces are at work revising the whole field of communicable knowledge with a view to its effective consumption. Because of segregation according to age, the school community represents a series of relatively homogeneous capacity- and interest-groups, although wide variations are recognized. The community at large, on the other hand, is extraordinarily diverse; it is a unit only in its broadly adult point of view, and requires analysis of personal predilection and educability that is often as baffling as

it is varied. Yet wherever seriously undertaken it has generally proved true that for each rational mind knowledge can be so appropriately prepared that it will "take"; an enlightened community apparently has the power, if it chooses, to see that each individual member is informed according to his capacity.

Illustrations of this effort to adapt important knowledge to special types of users may be drawn readily from projects in which the Carnegie Corporation is now cooperating. Thus the American Society for the Control of Cancer bends a goodly portion of its energies to stating what is now reliably known about cancer, and to publishing this information as widely as possible not only among physicians, but in simple, non-technical terms also among laymen. The American Child Health Association is essentially a demonstration and "propaganda" agency, and has put exceptional pedagogical skill into the literature and other publicity with which it seeks to create public sentiment for child health. The Immigrant Publication Society studies carefully the need and point of view of the newly arrived immigrant, and assembles in a variety of forms and in many languages the facts that will be of most service to him in making his way in a strange country.

In the field of economics alone three so-called research organizations have received funds from the Corporation, all of which make it their chief function to assemble and interpret available economic data, and to set forth their conclusions in such form as directly to affect the conduct of the average intelligent citizen. Thus the National Bureau of Economic Research recently issued a compact and authoritative estimate of the income of the United States—a notable antidote for the misinformation of the average soap-box orator. The Institute for Research in Land Economics makes studies, and is preparing to issue bulletins that should be of value to purchasers of real estate and securities of public utilities. The Institute of Economics at Washington is placing its major emphasis, not on gathering fresh facts, but on furnishing trustworthy interpretations of existing data that concern important economic problems.

These and hundreds of other agencies like them, together with a multitude of independent authors, are turning out daily a great amount of material suited to the varying needs of various types of individuals, and in some cases bearing on the fundamental requirements of all individuals. Most of this product trickles through publishers' notices, book reviews, news items, and into libraries and title-lists where, for

lack of a suitable distributing medium, it soon lies smothered and useless so far as the great majority of the population are concerned. Meanwhile the questions that it could answer, the ambitions and struggles that it could promote and assist, the unrecognized needs and opportunities that it could reveal are teeming in the minds of men who either know no recourse for satisfaction, or have no time for a laborious search. The daily losses in energy and material that result from sheer ignorance on the part of otherwise intelligent persons of how to avail themselves of the contents of books must be colossal beyond all calculation.

#### (5) *A Community Intelligence Service*

The remedy for this situation is simple and promising. Strong tendencies now apparent in many progressive cities indicate the ultimate development in most communities of an institution where a great range of useful information available in print may be secured authoritatively and quickly. It will be a center as familiar to every inhabitant as the local post-office, and as inevitably patronized. It will constitute the central intelligence service of the town not only for "polite" literature, but for every commercial and vocational field of information that it may prove practicable to enter. Merchants will find there catalogues and trade lists; builders and plumbers, the technical books of their crafts; students, old or young, the orderly progress of books or materials in any important study; clergymen, the best works and periodicals dealing with religion; motorists, the latest road maps and touring guides; and artists, both technical works and comprehensive collections of pictures.

Obviously such an institution in a small town will not possess an extensive collection of books and materials, but it will be in close working connection with towns and cities where such collections are, and where answers to questions, photostat copies of reference matter, and books on loan can be speedily secured at a trifling fee. With such connections the resources of a great part of the country may be made available for a relatively small circle.

Most towns of five thousand inhabitants now maintain a good high school and a considerable number of well-educated teachers for a small group of adolescent youth. It is rather absurd to suppose that a town even of this size cannot make corresponding provision for its entire adult population when it perceives what a service of no larger proportions adjusted to its adult needs might mean. At present such a community typically offers no local facilities dealing with important

knowledge and information aside from a weekly newspaper, a few churches, one or two moving-picture houses, a woman's club, and, if it is fortunate, a library passively open for a few hours on week-day afternoons. The bulk of the town's new ideas are derived from newspapers and periodical literature that originate outside, that are subscribed for by a few interested minds, and that have no evident bearing upon the concerns of the locality.

Yet all the activities of such a community are going vigorously forward on a competitive basis; the adult motives for the application of appropriate ideas are strong and alert; there is a large amount of leisure or wasted time; and the community is usually a stable, intelligent, homogeneous unit capable of united action. In general, conditions are favorable for mature and purposive behavior.

It is the ideas that are lacking in this situation; not the will to use them. Persons are needed in advantageous positions of leadership, not pledged to a special "cause," but set to watch the people at work, to study their ways, to discover helpful ideas that they can appreciate, and to direct their attention either casually or systematically to the wealth of serviceable things in print. This, to be sure, is putting the community to school, but in a manner completely in keeping with the methods, desires, and requirements of the adult, and not in an imitative transfer of the procedure characteristic of school and college. Such procedure will doubtless have its place, but the principle of successful approach to the practical educational service of adults will probably prove to be of quite a different sort.

#### (a) *An Intelligence Personnel*

The conspicuous and indispensable feature of such an institution as has been proposed is a well-specialized personal service, precisely as this is the *sine qua non* of a successful college. The purpose of an intelligence service is first to overcome the reluctance people have to seeking information, and later to maintain their interest and support by supplying just the information required in the form in which it can best be utilized by the person in question and in a manner that invites repetition. This is a task for an expert possessing personal tact, quick intellectual sympathies and appreciation, a thorough knowledge of a certain field of material, precision and discrimination of thought, and the power promptly to organize results.

These are not excessive requirements and can be met provided the

respective fields of knowledge are made sufficiently narrow. Many reference agencies that now exist defeat their purpose by placing in charge a staff assigned to the entire universe. Only the vaguest and most casual service can be expected of such "experts." Applicants for information are handled on the principle of turn and turn about, a procedure that is comparable to rotating courses alphabetically among the instructors on a college faculty. Yet the demands for differentiation both in the extent of ground covered and the peculiar treatment required by each successive applicant in the adult group are far more exacting than in any college. The reference expert at an adult intelligence center must command all of the college teacher's familiarity with the literature of a strictly limited field plus the power which the college teacher may, and often does, lack completely, namely, the power speedily to read his applicant's mental equipment and point of view, and to sense intuitively the character of his personal need. Failure here is not a case where the careless student can be held accountable, but where a short-sighted instructor fails to interpret an interest and to supply the demand. The present result of such failure is that serious enquirers simply do not apply for such trifling service as is to be had.

It is important that such a person as has been described be accessible easily, and not after long waits and explanations by reference up the line through subordinates who cannot help the enquirer. It is important that the service go further than placing a pile of strange books or other printed material on the table before an applicant. The acquisition of knowledge is forbidding for many chiefly because it is housed in books, and the extraction thereof is itself an art. In certain fields, and to some extent in all fields, this inhibition operates on all students. For trained workers with books the technique of limited departments of knowledge soon becomes automatic and rapid, and should be at the enquirer's disposal. Very many applications can be answered directly, by telephone or in writing, in terms of ideas instead of books, with perhaps a reference to a single book where the idea is best stated. The net result of all such service should be to simplify and invite instead of to bewilder and repel; each patron should come to realize that all the resources of the institution will be fully utilized in giving him promptly what he needs, if that can be discovered.

Systematic study could be greatly facilitated by this type of assistant. Some will always find regular study difficult without a formal teacher. There are, however, numberless minds (and these *ipso facto* the best

worth helping) so naturally independent or already so well trained as to require only the occasional sympathetic and illuminating touch of one who actually knows the ground well, to cover rapidly and profitably one field after another. Instead of the present blank outlook, specific curricula in terms of books leading logically from the beginning to the terminus, *pro tempore*, of every branch of knowledge should be prepared and made conspicuously accessible. The community could well afford to guarantee the necessary books and tools for all such students. The cost would be negligible when compared with the great expense now required to maintain them in elaborate educational institutions, and the results might be found to compare not unfavorably. Certainly, a considerable modification would ensue in our ideas of what it is necessary or advisable to press upon young people in high school and college were it possible to rely confidently on an institution which, after they leave school, would lead any of them who had ability and real inclination through the best that is known in any field of learning.

The type of service above outlined, though of the foremost importance, is but a passive background for the proper function of a true community intelligence personnel. This function is actively aggressive. A college or high school staff does not content itself with answering questions, but finds its central activity in discovering advantageous ways of preparing and presenting important material to students for the purpose of arousing their progressive interest. The similar task of community analysis confronting the staff of an intelligence center is quite as preponderant, and covers an immensely wider range, both of personal and group interests, together with a far greater variety of mental attitude among its beneficiaries. Its business is not only to answer but to raise educative questions in as many minds as possible; it must not only interpret the dream, but for many persons it must provide the dream as well.

It is at this point that the service here described becomes significant as the decisive factor in the future handling of knowledge for community use. A municipality of the size, say, of Akron, Ohio (208,000), has in its elementary and high schools a staff of nearly 1000 teachers for some 33,000 pupils. It has a municipal college of eight or nine hundred students taught by fifty or sixty professors and instructors. It is hardly unreasonable to assume that such a city will in the near future be employing a group of at least a score of selected, highly trained, and experienced persons of expert attainments who with their assistants will constitute an intelligence service for the one hundred and fifty odd

thousand adults whose formal education has ceased, but who are now in a position to make sound practical use of appropriate ideas. Each of these experts will be in charge of one particular field of knowledge, and it will be his business, by every possible device, to disclose the general aspects of that field to all the citizens of Akron, and its finer applications to those whose interest it specially concerns. When a valuable book on new processes in rubber manufacture appears, the technical librarian will immediately see to it that the Akron factories are furnished with a good description of the book and an estimate of its precise value to them. When a specific treatment for diabetes is announced, the medical library expert will be the first to be informed, and will thereafter be a source of reliable information both to physicians and laymen, concerning the development and availability of the remedy, seeing to it that the news is spread among the laggard doctors. If fresh designs and color combinations are unearthed in ancient Egyptian pottery, the art division at once calls the attention of the Akron potters to the possibilities of their utilization. Outside fact-finding bodies, such as have been already referred to, learn that in Akron information should be deposited with the intelligence service; that thence it will automatically reach its furthest destinations.

These men and women will necessarily become in turn the most diligent students of the community they serve. A labor group desires to study the economics of taxation; a woman's club plans a course in literature; a class of telephone girls undertakes to explore radio. The automatic appeal in every case is to the corresponding representative of the city's intelligence staff, whose problem is to turn so much available energy to the best account. His business is to make important knowledge through books popular; and by talks, lectures, and interviews, he endeavors throughout the city to prove how valuable and available the contents of books in his field really are.

Taken as a whole, this staff would be the popular driving force in scientific education, both adult and adolescent. It would encroach as rapidly as possible upon the present appalling waste through enforced idleness without suitable mental occupation. Special provision could readily be made to attract the able-bodied unemployed. The collective years of discouraged convalescence on hospital beds, where some easily discovered book would bring not only vitalizing relief but permanent profit, would at last come to an end. The rapid degenerative effects of



hopeless mental idleness among prisoners would receive the simplest of all remedies—something interesting to think about. It is unbelievable the extent to which the most intensely motivated situations have been ignored in adult education, because of failure to use even such suitable tools as are already available in print. In similar case are sailors on long voyages, firemen or police on station duty, and many types of operatives in purely mechanical pursuits. To one book station, a fortunate farmer recently reported that his enterprising wife had read aloud to him over ninety books that year—while he milked his cows! An immense number of practical opportunities for a diffusion of service simply await the advent of the trained, unconventional mind that sees things as they are, and has courage and skill to proceed.

It is clear that public servants of this quality and capacity would soon hold an exceptional place in any community. They would be the real pilots of its social, intellectual, and economic life—the linesmen alike of its material and spiritual power, bringing knowledge and need together, not for the remote appreciation of the immature, but for the immediate ripened reaction of the adult. Mere grubbers in books according to professional tradition or a prevalent conception of a public librarian will not do. They must indeed understand their several fields of knowledge, but they must understand the world of men as well or better; their excellence is measured by their power to connect the two. They must have sensitized minds that in addition to a good education possess quick insight into new relations and novel applications. They must watch their community and attend its professional gatherings, not primarily to advertise their services, but to discover how knowledge in books may be selected and arranged the better to meet the changing demands or a shifting point of view. They should work beneath the surface in terms of truth and a wiser world. Achievements such as these are wholly practicable and when understood would receive distinction. Such counselors, constituting a sort of new clergy of the mind, would open a fresh career that could not fail to appeal powerfully to capable men and women.

*(b) The Reorganization of Important Knowledge*

In addition, and secondary only, to an adequate personnel, a successful intelligence service requires an enlarged and diversified organization of the ways of getting knowledge and a simplification of knowledge itself.

A movement of almost revolutionary significance, but essentially of this nature, is the recently organized American Law Institute. At present both lawyers and judges are engulfed in a mass of precedent and statutory legislation, the bulk of which creates difficulties that go far to weaken the principle on which judicial procedure in this country rests. The Institute proposes by carefully guarded processes to restate the principles of law involved from point to point, thus, it is hoped, enabling the courts to discard the vast and often conflicting accumulations wherein the principle has hitherto been embedded. The result is not intended to constitute an official code, but to furnish an authoritative aid in determining what the law is, and should contribute immeasurably to the relief and health of judicial processes.

The systems by which certain professions collect and digest new information of importance are less spectacular, but of great service. The monthly review of medical and surgical literature and reports published by the Journal of the American Medical Association constitute an invaluable channel of pertinent, trustworthy fact, stripped of unnecessary verbiage, and calculated to keep the practitioner sensible of the advance in his science. The engineers not only do this, but have their engineering library place its classification marks on each item in proof before publication. The subscriber is consequently in a position to cut the periodical at once to fit a universal filing system.

Besides the development of agencies for sifting and condensing knowledge itself, a process that is everywhere continually in progress, there is the need, already mentioned, for recasting ideas to suit a special age, attitude, or point of view. The propagation of an idea, like the making of a photograph, requires that a properly prepared surface be exposed under suitable conditions to an object on which there is sufficient light. Experience has shown that a large part of the assumed perversity of youth in the face of an education has been traceable to the fact that one or more of these conditions were not present. So also a great part of the original sin residing in the "stupid," "lazy," or "indifferent" adult has disappeared when knowledge for which he is prepared is well presented to him under adequate illumination. Many authors address themselves naturally to the limited audience of their own class, to whom alone their ideas are of importance. Students of Gaelic, or philatelists, or bridge players usually possess in common certain exclusive bodies of ideas on a fairly uniform level. There are wide fields, however, that must be reworked repeatedly for different types of men-

tality and experience. This adaptation of material to the diverse needs of a normal community both in respect of quality of reader and of the varying amounts of leisure available is the most pressing pedagogical problem in the spreading of ideas. The best of personal service can scarcely avail if good tools of this sort are lacking.

Certain types of aid are suggestive of wide extension. For example, there should be available at every intelligence center, for a nominal price, a series of readable syllabi covering practically all knowledge in brief coherent units of treatment. Each should be prepared by an acknowledged authority in the subject, should be handled in a cordial, personal manner not without humor (think of William James!), like the informal conversations of a friend, and should be interwoven with specific references to books, pages, and paragraphs where the best elaboration of the point in question may be found. Thus in a few hours a layman could acquire a comprehensive view of, say, modern American poetry and its significance through the eyes of some eminent critic and writer who would leave the reader with the impression of having had a personal letter on the subject. Authority, lucidity, vitality, and brevity would be the desiderata in these monographs; they should have wide circulation, and their successful authorship might well convey distinction of peculiarly rare quality.

A somewhat similar treatment of great divisions of knowledge has recently taken shape in a series of "Outlines" of history, literature, art, and so forth, the object of which is to present a brief, readable survey of what is alive and significant to-day in a given field, and to give to it such an organic reworking that a vivid, coherent impression of the whole will remain. To do this successfully requires extraordinary abilities lest the product become insipid with generalities, but as a source of good tools for general education the field for honest work in prospective drawing of this sort is inexhaustible.

Fresh knowledge of widespread, practical importance in many fields is in urgent need of collation and interpretation in interesting, applicable form. What the National Health Council has done with its simple and authoritative booklets on certain aspects of human health, is typical of a presentation that should be universally available wherever the undisputed essentials of human welfare are concerned.

Great advance is possible likewise in the extent to which the introduction into various abilities and skills may be conducted through printed matter independently of a teacher, as commercial correspond-

ence schools have long since discovered. Existing material of this kind is multifarious and of most uneven quality, so that the novice is soon at sea, whereas a collection of carefully prepared matter for such purposes, if under wise supervision, would offer a great service.

Consider further the single case of two lists of books on any subject, one giving solely the title and author, the other including a brief but careful annotation of each with an extract from a competent review. The first sets the reader a very short distance on his way, misleads him perhaps to a detailed treatise when he needed a brief summary, or bores him when he could have been entranced. The other takes the place of a wise and discriminating friend who tells the reader frankly what he may expect, and guides him to material that he can use. Library catalogues are hopelessly and needlessly dumb.

It is in the attempt to meet this need that certain active administrators of existing book collections have been most successful in their contacts with the public. Bibliographies more or less carefully prepared and annotated, and differentiated for a great number of special purposes, have made books far more available than they would otherwise have been, and have no doubt created the habit of reading in multitudes of adults who would not otherwise have acquired it. Any professional worker in this field will admit, however, that the possibilities for valuable service of this nature have scarcely been touched.

In this whole problem of the adaptation of written material to individual needs it must be remembered that in the case of the intelligent adult, who is anxious to learn, probably 95 per cent of the available "pedagogy" that fits his case can be put on paper, either in the organization of the subject or in the instructions for its pursuit. In the hands of a competent library expert, therefore, such matter becomes a surprisingly effective substitute for a teacher.

### *C. Knowledge and Understanding derived from Sources other than Print*

There is a third classification of knowledge which may be made to include impressions received from a variety of sources other than books and periodicals. In so far as these forms make positive contribution to the welfare of the individual or of the community, they will doubtless be increasingly utilized, until some or all of them shall come to be maintained by the community itself.

Several of these forms lend themselves to ready association with the kind of intelligence organization that has been described.

(1) *Lectures*

Better usually than to read a book is to hear its contents described or retold and enforced by a striking and colorful personality. Much of the newest material not yet committed to print is to be had only in this manner, and when the talk can be illustrated by good pictures, the impression is about as vivid as it is possible to make it. The passion of the intelligent American for listening to lectures where the personality of the lecturer counts, as well as the ideas he utters, is characteristic of the direct, hand-to-hand attitude of the pioneer from whom he is descended, and is an excellent thing to foster, provided the practice does not degenerate into an incoherent dilettanteism. Especially valuable is it where such lectures from abroad are the outgrowth of a well-considered plan by which the local staff can stimulate preparation through reading, and can follow up the interest by further use of books.

As a medium of influence for the permanent staff itself, facilities for lecture and conference purposes would be indispensable. Frequent talks of an informal nature by the expert in a given department, closely fitted into the use of books by habitual readers, would lend interest and continuity to their thinking, and add much to the vitality of the institution. There would be constant opportunities for combining interested readers into study groups of a homogeneous sort and of promoting, through this interaction of reading and of personal stimulus, the real satisfactions of each individual.

University extension courses and lectures have been familiar in England and in this country for many years, and have performed an exceedingly beneficent work. They are, however, precisely what the name implies: courses of strictly academic character, organized after the university model, and given by a university instructor outside of the walls of the institution, but often for university examinations and credit. Such courses will always be an educational asset in any town fortunate enough to command them.

For courses of this type the proposed organization would provide a home and tools, together with whatever cooperation of staff members might be desirable. The very existence of a well-administered community institute would be a standing invitation to the nearest university

to establish its courses there. With books and expert staff available, excellent conditions would be guaranteed. Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that the true genius of the contemplated institute would be of another sort. Less formal, less governed by tradition, and wholly uninterested in any examinations, credit, or degrees, it would constitute the first powerful and aggressive community agency for education to be operated directly and solely in the interests of knowledge and its applications for their own sake as might be required by any member of the community.

### (2) *Museums*

Closely allied to the service of distributing knowledge through books is that involved in the temporary or permanent display of some of the objects discussed in books. This has no reference to the useless, but almost indestructible, accumulations from indiscriminate donors that fill the cases of many existing museums and collections. If the museum be well organized, every article in it is "alive," and bears definitely upon some living human concern. The labels and descriptions really inform and even entertain. The purpose is, wherever possible, to exhibit *processes* of growth, of manufacture, of historical development, illustrative in each case of an important, coherent idea; to import exhibits from other museums; to encourage manufacturers to display the educative features of their products; to present objectively the facts of civic growth and needs with a view to future changes; to assemble permanent collections of unquestioned worth that are suited to the particular requirements of the community.

This type of museum is an aid of the first order both to general intelligence and to specific enquiry, and fits admirably into a general organization for these ends.

### (3) *Motion Pictures*

The remarkable development of the moving picture as a vivid and accurate means of illustration has fully justified early expectations. It has captured by far the leading place as a source of entertainment in communities of all sizes, and is gradually making its way as an educational factor. Both of these fields have a legitimate claim to attention here.

The educational function of moving pictures, having encountered mechanical and economic obstacles, has not as yet assumed the important place which seems potentially to belong to it. The machine itself

is still somewhat too elaborate to suit either the purse or the convenience of the ordinary school classroom; and the difficulty of stopping, turning back, and repeating a section for purposes of instruction has prevented many from adopting it. Furthermore, the commercial distribution of educational films has been and still is a problem. There are no comprehensive, descriptive lists available for the customer, nor any convenient arrangements whereby desirable films may be secured when discovered. A further reason, and possibly the main cause, for this retarded development rests in the fact that the real burden of bringing out the educational film has been tacitly left to the commercial producer, who very early found it financially unprofitable, and gave it little further attention.

These are all conditions that in time will be overcome. That the motion picture in itself is unsurpassed as a means for visual instruction, any one who has followed the pictured analysis of the construction of a motor car used in the army can testify. Many processes of natural or artificial growth, most forms of procedure and fabrication, delicate surgical operations, ultra-rapid or extremely slow motion—all lend themselves to film treatment with great gain in lucidity and vividness. Such films are bound to become an indispensable aid to the lecturer and demonstrator, and even to the users of books without personal intervention; they doubtless will eventually be available at convenient centers as books are now. A great variety of public institutions and private commercial firms are apparently ready to prepare pictures of their processes and products having first-class scientific value as soon as a demand for them can be assured.

The use of motion pictures as a source of entertainment in connection with a community intelligence center may require some explanation. If so, the main ground is that thoroughly fine entertainment, while not necessarily "instructive" in the narrow sense, has that within it which contributes an elusive but very precious element to "knowledge and understanding." It cannot be ordered and systematized in the form of learning, but if its quality be kept high, its effect may be equally important. A good way in which to ensure its excellence is to associate it with other interests of high character, on the basis of municipal criticism and support.

To many parents in cities throughout the land the existence, in close connection with a library of books, of a theater where the finest obtainable pictures would be daily displayed, free from the vulgarity,

indecent, and trite sensationalism of the average commercial picture house, would be a boon unspeakable. No arrangement under modern conditions could offer superior opportunities for building up in young people a sound taste that would react steadily into good books and other forms of mental satisfaction. The fiction section of the modern library with all its serious weaknesses is, on the whole, a decided asset because of its service in relaxation and entertainment. A moving-picture section, conducted in the same manner, would be subject to complete selective administration as fiction is not, and when fully developed might prove a still more powerful influence even with adults.

#### (4) *The Fine Arts*

Since the provision of Mr. Carnegie's "wise extravagancies" for Pittsburgh,<sup>1</sup> two decades ago, popular ideas regarding the fine arts and their significance have undergone a pervasive and refining change. This has been due in part, at least, to a steadily advancing popular education, to a reaction from the materialistic preoccupations of pioneer days, and to increasing contacts with Europe, particularly in the form of immigrant representatives of art-loving peoples, who, of whatever class, have brought with them a native appreciation and a solid tradition of respect for music, opera, drama, and the graphic arts. The time is appreciably nearer when funds raised by taxation will be devoted to such forms of art as a matter of course. For promoting human "understanding" they are unsurpassed and require no defense.

The beginnings of such endeavors in America are everywhere to be found. They do not as yet usually receive official support except in the case of some art collections, though the experiment with a municipal theater at Northampton, Massachusetts, the successful municipal orchestra at Baltimore, the municipal organ and organist at Portland, Maine, and the movement to develop a municipal art center in New York are typical indications in one section of the country alone, of increasing popular interest that has a wholly legitimate basis. There is no reason why such tendencies should cease until the impulses to make widely available the fine emotional experiences that the arts seek to evoke shall have found expression.

It is unnecessary to elaborate this type of knowledge. It is constantly assuming new and surprising forms, of which radio broadcasting is the

<sup>1</sup> See page 70



most recent and perhaps the most revolutionary. Its cultivation, in adjustment to varying community tendencies, will be an endless process of planning and fulfilment. It need only be urged here that as these various aspects of cultural diffusion take shape, they should be allowed to come together in a combination that will provide for their close natural interdependence.

The points of contact are innumerable. Print collections and music libraries have the same technical requirements that collections of books present. Books themselves are the indispensable tools and repositories of all the arts, not only in the narrow specialty concerned, but also in the broader relations of these specialties to many other arts and fields of knowledge. Facilities for lectures and visual representation are aids as useful in one as in another of the various activities contemplated. It is easy and neat to set up each little interest independently with its own management and series of supporting relationships—a museum here, a library there, an auditorium, a municipal picture theater, or an art gallery at other points competing for attention. It is perhaps more difficult at the outset, but it is certainly far more significant and impressive to conceive and express all of these as interrelated parts of a genuine community institute of all the arts and sciences. By this means the several departments support and dignify one another. By maintaining their integral character these agencies of individual and community betterment represent a single fine conception commanding a larger place in the thought and enthusiasm of each patron than would otherwise be possible. There would be few indeed that could not be attracted by some service provided in such a combination. And having obtained satisfaction at one point, it is an easy step to a sense of proprietorship in the whole.

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II  
THE TAX-SUPPORTED PUBLIC LIBRARY  
AS AN AGENCY FOR THE SYSTEMATIC DIFFUSION  
OF KNOWLEDGE AMONG ADULTS

FOR American readers the obvious rejoinder to the foregoing pages would be to point to that deservedly notable and now generally characteristic feature of most American cities—the tax-supported public library, and to many this reply would seem conclusive.

It is true, as has been pointed out, that a public tax-supported book collection is an indispensable basis for a community intelligence service, and therein most American communities enjoy a remarkable initial advantage over other countries. But in few American communities has there as yet been realized more than the bare outline of the potential content of this conception, and in the great majority of cases the existing library service is so far from such a notion as to constitute a totally different phenomenon.

The conception is, of course, old; it has inspired a few librarians for many years, and has been responsible for some recent developments that are very striking. Since the war the pressure of need behind this idea has redoubled. Progressive librarians everywhere realize that provision must be made for digesting and reducing to usable form the great masses of important information now accumulating with unexampled rapidity, and that means must be found whereby trustworthy knowledge of wider range than heretofore may be made available, especially for adult minds, with relative promptness and good judgment if our actual resources are to prove effective. Could this be accomplished for what is already clearly known in the field of hygiene and preventive medicine alone, the results certainly would be surprising.

1. THE LIBRARY AND THE PUBLIC

That the public library will be the instrument for these operations can scarcely be doubted by those who have followed the remarkable success of such elementary efforts as have already been made. Public response has been immediate. Fortunately, it is in the nature of the situation that the wiser and more far-sighted library service becomes, the more generously and permanently it is recognized and supported.

Men realize the source of a timely and helpful idea as unerringly and as gratefully as they remember the source of palatable food, and they will support agencies that guide them to such ideas. However disagreeable the conclusion may be, libraries that lack support may as well confront the fact that they are not furnishing the kind of service required by the individuals whom they ought to reach. For the sort of service that is here in view there is no measure of success more relentlessly just in the long run than popular opinion and the resulting appropriation.

It is gratifying, therefore, to find that the most promising movement among librarians at the present time is for a close study of the means for securing an intelligent diffusion of service. They call it "publicity" — a term which may be necessary, but which is not quite fair to their idea. A notice to a resident that a valuable registered package awaits him at the post-office would not be termed "publicity," yet the service of the library is more nearly of that nature. It aims to call attention to hitherto unappreciated values in the manner of simple service characteristic of a telephone directory or of postal deliveries. The value of the ideas contained in books is as real and universal as food and clothing except for those who cannot read. Tax-payers have a right to know just what these values are and how they may be procured. It is the task of the library staff to discover the maximum value of its stock for each individual and to give notice. This is a highly refined information service; "publicity" may well be left to the natural communicativeness of those who find themselves well served.

## 2. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN LIBRARY SERVICE

The results of study and experiment on the part of energetic librarians in the direction of a diffused service are convincing. On occasion they are little short of spectacular, and it is mainly their success that justifies such expectations as have been suggested in the foregoing pages. A brief review of what has recently been done and of what is now going on in libraries in creating better service will make this clear.

### *A. General Library Service*

The chief business of a community library is to produce a general diffusion of knowledge among small, ill-defined, and constantly shifting groups, where each need is peculiar to the individual himself, and must be dealt with separately. Such a function involves a multitude of

minute adjustments, each of which is essential in certain cases, but no one of which is exceptional, and all of which together make up the main amount for which the library stands as a whole. Recent progress in this direction may perhaps be shown best by a concrete example that represents notably suggestive practice.

### *General Library Service at Cleveland*

The city library of Cleveland, Ohio, serves a population of 880,000 people. In its collection of over 800,000 books, circulation and reference volumes are placed together, and the shelves are open to the public. The reader has before him, therefore, the complete resources of the library on any one topic. He also has immediate access to an experienced librarian in charge of that particular division — a narrowly restricted field of knowledge. This person has the natural ability, education, and special training in that field of a well-chosen college instructor. He has several assistants working under his direction. He is not secluded, but is at the reader's disposal. He is a research specialist in discovering what it is in his field that one needs. Naturally, he cannot give prolonged instruction, but his experience and his thorough knowledge of the subject make a few minutes' conference with him from time to time worth hours of search by one's self. The difference between this person and the usual reference librarian is enormous. The latter is familiar with the technical aids in the use of books in general, but otherwise is likely to be uninformed; the specialist has all this and, being in addition a trained student in the field concerned, he knows and has read the books, understands their relative merit, appreciates the extent and nature of the applicant's requirement, and can take him directly to the suitable material if it is available.

In this group of division heads is the beginning of a true community "faculty," whose worth to the city of Cleveland will become more apparent as their number increases and their function becomes better known. Any Clevelander may "matriculate" for life with this array of teacher-librarians, whose chief business it is to study the needs of the city of Cleveland with relation to the printed matter in their charge. They answer or provide for the answering of specific enquiries referred to them from without; they consult directly with applicants as to books or information; they plan or explain reading-lists for special purposes; they devise systematic reading courses for individuals, groups, or organizations; they visit societies and clubs either to explain the operations

of the library or to discuss books and their use; they give formal lectures in the library or its branches; they prepare or suggest to the editor new material for publications setting forth the contents or use of books; and finally they are constantly observing the city and its population to discover new ways of getting the important books read by persons who need them.

One division assistant at Cleveland, who is in charge of specific adult education in a narrower sense, seeks to adapt the library facilities to classes of immigrant foreigners, and of illiterate or partly educated natives. The teachers either volunteer or are provided by the Board of Education or other institutions, and the library furnishes a book collection for each. During the past year 241 sets of books were sent to such classes in public schools, to Y. W. C. A. and settlement classes, and to other adult study groups. Members of the staff talk to each of these classes, as well as to each of the evening classes in the city, often bringing them to the library in a body and taking out cards for each student. Descriptive lists of books likely to be of interest to such readers are printed and given them. The same procedure is followed with naturalization classes.

Library clubs among the younger and older boys and girls are so numerous at Cleveland (70 in 1923-24), that a special library supervisor gives her full time to them. They meet weekly with a volunteer leader, and follow a great variety of projects, but the library contribution is always uppermost and indispensable. In 1921 some forty of the younger clubs combined under library direction to give an historical pageant of the city.

The editorial division issues the material for use in all aspects of the library's work—nearly one hundred publications in all during the year. That which goes to the public consists mainly of reading-lists for a great diversity of special purposes or special groups of people, directions for special uses of the library, information as to its service, and finally a monthly list of new books with expert annotations preceded by interesting editorials. This is extensively distributed throughout the city. A monthly house organ contributes news, entertainment, and professional matter to a staff the morale of which is the obvious secret of the institution's unusual service.

Besides the main collection, a municipal reference section in the City Hall, a separate library for the blind, and another for teachers, the service of the library in Cleveland reaches its citizen supporters

through 943 different agencies. There are fifty-two branch libraries—more than in the New York City boroughs of Manhattan, The Bronx, and Staten Island (44) with their combined population of more than three million. Seventeen of these branches are housed in commodious buildings of their own, frequently possessing auditoriums and club-rooms, and enjoying all the conveniences and skilled service of independent institutions.

Thirty branch libraries are in public school buildings. Twelve of these serve both the school and the neighborhood, while the remainder are intended for pupils and teachers only, but actually reach many members of their families besides. In schools that lack easy access to branch libraries, there are 789 class-room libraries from which books may be circulated for home use out of a constantly changing stock.

In addition to these centers, the main library effects fruitful contacts under varied conditions in about 106 deposit and delivery stations. Thus in some forty factories, department stores, and telephone exchanges small collections of from 200 volumes up are kept in charge either of a trained librarian or of some responsible volunteer, and are changed as needed. In a long list of social-welfare agencies, educational and religious organizations, hospitals and nurse centers, police and fire stations, camps, and public institutions, only a few volumes are kept, but orders are filled as required. Canceled books are sent to the jails and city workhouse, and the library's Stations Department sees to it that they are used.

Special attention should be called to the existing school relations in this city as one of the most conspicuous features of its library's success. It is as deplorable as it is unnecessary that in general throughout the country the public library and the schools speak a different tongue and rarely understand each other. Furthermore, this lack of adjustment appears to be due quite as often to the narrow vision and perfunctory procedure within the school as it is to limited resources and unskilled service at the library.

At Cleveland the school and the library labor hand in hand for the pupil. Indeed, the library is in a sense the modeling board on which the teacher's work is performed. It is the conscious aim of the system that no child shall lack convenient access either to a branch library in, or adjacent to, the school, or else to a class-room library; and both types of service are organized and managed by the main library personnel directly for his benefit. An especially trained and expert libra-

rian, selected and in part paid by the library, looks after him, gives him regular instruction in the care and use of books, and sees to it that his experience is happy. Reference of pupils to the library on the part of teachers is incessant; both teachers and pupils consult with the librarians as to book selection and reservations for particular purposes, and use the collection as an integral and indispensable part of the school equipment which it actually is. During the school day, pupils visit the libraries regularly, and after dismissal the reading-rooms are crowded until evening. The registered school borrowers under fifteen years of age took home last year an average of nineteen books each. The same situation obtains throughout all the schools, including the high schools and the teachers' training school. What this habitual familiarity with the library means after a student has graduated may easily be imagined: he has been bred to it and by it, and the institution remains an intimately serviceable factor in his life after he leaves school.

Through this series of distributing centers, the people of Cleveland took for home use last year 5,206,625 books, or nearly six books for every man, woman, and child in the entire city — a city in which the population of foreign birth or parentage is relatively even larger than in New York. In short, there appears to be here the basis of well-nigh perfect mechanics in book distribution; wherever a need appears, a card or telephone call brings a generous assortment of well-chosen volumes and an invitation to send for more.

No complete record of visiting readers can be kept, but a partial count gave 3,456,913 in the main centers. The average week-day attendance is over ten thousand readers. The number of enquiries received by telephone, through the mails, or verbally could not even be approximated. Several million questions were answered on thousands of subjects, many of them of the greatest importance to the enquirers.

With such a relatively well-developed service as this, it would be of interest to know to what extent the city may have been "saturated" and the possibilities of library use exhausted. Is there a point of diminishing returns? If so, where is it, to what form of service does it apply, and is it inherent or simply temporary? These questions are difficult to answer, inasmuch as values cannot always be measured in figures, but the responsible heads of the Cleveland staff would scout the possibility of "saturation." The service in 1922 increased by about 20 per cent over the year before, owing in part to extensive unemployment, and in part to the advertising that resulted from a bond issue campaign,

yet it is their judgment that the real development of library patronage throughout the community has scarcely begun. Their means for extending service have been carefully selected and most skilfully worked. There are many forms of information which they dare not use or press too vigorously lest the demands at once outrun the available facilities.<sup>1</sup>

The crucial question in all of these phenomena for the future of library service is necessarily financial. Does public service of distinctive quality and well-nigh universal application result in public support?

In Cleveland there can be no question about the popular aspect of the library's reputation. At the November election of 1921—an "off" year in a period of great economic depression—an additional bond issue of \$2,000,000 for a new library building was passed with a majority of more than 20,000. Of the eight ballots voted, the library bond issue ran next to the highest, which was for mayor, and showed 140,000 votes cast. The only other bond issue—\$2,000,000 for a court-house and jail—was overwhelmingly rejected. This vote is significant, inasmuch as the first \$2,000,000 for the library voted in 1912 called out only 34,000 votes and received a majority of but 1400.

For current maintenance the Cleveland Library received from taxes in 1922, \$1.35 per capita on the estimated population for that year, and expended in actual operation \$1.30 per capita. A comparison with public school expenditures for the same year, including sinking funds, shows that the city paid \$17 per capita of population for its elementary and secondary schools, and for its library system, \$1.54! Yet only two-thirds of the latter amount constitutes the city's sole provision for the organized information and education of its entire adult population. The city is, of course, to be congratulated on a library service that has induced a support which is to-day more than twice that of the average American city for the same purpose. Nevertheless, one cannot resist the prediction that the rapid refinement and extension of these same principles for making ideas in books universally fruitful will shortly find Clevelanders paying many times this amount from motives of demonstrated economy.<sup>2</sup> The many admirable characteristics that have made Cleve-

<sup>1</sup> Since this account was written, the Cleveland library service has been extended to all of Cuyahoga County. Branches throughout the county are in process of establishment, and soon the 60,000 people in suburbs and rural districts will enjoy the same privileges as those living in the city.

<sup>2</sup> No small part of the success of the Cleveland Library has been due, aside from its exceptional leadership, to another fact which must not go unmentioned; namely, its non-political control. Its board of trustees, otherwise wholly independent, is appointed for long terms, on a non-political basis, by the Board of Education—a device which has worked notably well in both Cleveland and Detroit.



land noteworthy as a city are certainly not without significant relations to the millions of volumes of good reading that are absorbed annually by her people. Intangible assets of this type bear a high rate of interest, and are the safest possible insurance for a finer city as they accumulate.

With this sketch of a modern community intelligence service in the background, some of its special aspects and possibilities may be illustrated by citations from successful procedure here and there throughout the country.

### *B. Specialization in Libraries*

#### *(1) Business Library at Newark*

The effort to segregate and serve the needs of special classes in the community is well illustrated by the work of the business man's library in Newark, New Jersey, which has been the model of many elsewhere. Here has been brought together in a central location available printed matter that concerns the manufacturer, the merchant, the tradesman, the salesman, and the banker, together with all those whose work at times touches these pursuits. A great variety of personal, telephone, and trade directories covering the entire country; trade, business, and financial periodicals with indexes; a large collection of maps, pamphlets, and clippings, besides a considerable library of books dealing with every aspect of business activity; stock and bond information; financial reports; investment data; commercial and industrial information both domestic and foreign; statutes, session laws, and bills as introduced in the state legislature; service from other business organizations by mail or telephone; all this, conveniently arranged within small compass, with expert reference service, typists, and transcription clerks, costs Newark about \$20,000 a year.

At this center is to be secured the answer to any reasonable enquiry that a person in a city noted for its extraordinary variety of business interests may desire to make. An average of some 425 calls for information are handled each day. Many of these come over the telephone. It is needless to say that Newark business men support such a service with enthusiasm and defend the organization that has conceived and provided it. In very large concerns private technical libraries may prove convenient, but such collections ultimately enhance rather than impair the usefulness of the general center for the great majority of users, and even for the large houses themselves.

(2) *Municipal Reference Library at Cleveland*

At Cleveland, Ohio, the city library's municipal reference branch presents another example of effective special service. Housed in the City Hall, it serves all departments of the city government with technical books, special information, statistics, reports of investigations, data from other cities, and current works of all kinds of importance to citizens. Expert knowledge from all over the world with reference to paving, sewerage, lighting, water supply, garbage treatment, food inspection, city planning, and so forth, is to be had here with the aid of skilful assistants. Discriminating service of this sort is very persuasive with City Fathers, and is likely in the long run to save much money for the tax-payer. Librarians who feel that their institution is not properly appreciated by the city government might well ask themselves just how indispensable they are to the individuals that make up the current administration.

(3) *Teachers' Library at Indianapolis*

The Indianapolis Library has organized a Teachers' Special Library and placed it in the school administration building in the heart of the city, accessible to all teachers. The collection is in charge of expert librarians, who also possess the teacher's training and point of view. The purpose is to collect, classify, file, and utilize all obtainable information in print for the direct use of teachers. Separate collections are brought together to avoid duplication, and provision is made for systematic distribution of material throughout the city.

The library contains reference books, pedagogical books, educational periodicals, current classified pamphlet material, government and state educational publications, courses of study in other cities, text-books both new and old on exhibition, class-room libraries, circulating material on the Indianapolis course of study, annual reports and other publications from leading city school systems, visualizing material, slides, maps, stereopticons, stereoscopes, films, diagrams, standard tests and diagnosis material on school subjects, compilations by local teachers, catalogues, and exhibits of an educational character. The institution serves as a reference library and as a place for meetings of teachers and officers; it is a bureau of all manner of information on matters dealing with education. By means of competent service the widely scattered materials in each teacher's field are brought together to economize his time, and to lend freshness, enthusiasm, and originality to his work. Under modern conditions this is a marked advantage to instruction.

#### (4) *Departmental Specialization*

The special service for large and distinct groups of individuals, as above described, differs only in the matter of physical detachment from the specialization everywhere characteristic of progressive libraries. The segregation of the books themselves has been a natural and comparatively inexpensive development, while the assembling of an adequate staff of trained scholars who know the books and can mediate between them and prospective users is just beginning.

Industrial centers like Detroit and Pittsburgh have built up in their libraries technology departments of great strength. These cover the processes of preparing materials and of manufacture, the scientific and technical journals, patent literature, trade catalogues, the literature of scientific societies, physical and commercial resources of all parts of the earth, scientific biography, technical bibliography, and local industrial activities. The Pittsburgh department gives systematic instruction to engineering students and occasional instruction to others. It has a long list of patrons whose special activities are known and who receive from it prompt notice of reference books, magazine articles, and professional literature in which they are interested. The demands on the Detroit technology department have increased apace with the phenomenal growth of the city during the past ten years, and have compelled the consideration of a special science building with more adequate resources. "We might double our library material of this special kind and it would still be inadequate," says the librarian.

Music departments have existed in public libraries for many years, and six or eight cities have collections of the first rank. Oakland, California, has a library of church choir music built up and used by 125 organizations. It is an obvious economy, that can hardly fail to contribute considerably to the improvement of musical taste. The El Paso Library furnishes orchestra scores for the city symphony orchestra as well as for those in the moving-picture theaters. The Cleveland Orchestra has the library use its announcements to suggest books appropriate to the programs and to call attention to its available musical scores. The Portland, Oregon, Library contributes the explanatory notes to the printed symphony programs. The Library of Pomona, California (population, 14,000), has a large collection of phonograph records for the use of schools and clubs, and gives regular concerts with these and with musicians in person. The Utica, New York, Library provides illustrated explanatory talks previous to musical events of note,

and the St. Louis Library gives recitals for children on musical subjects.

Similarly, books on art are generally segregated, and books on economics, some phases of history, and genealogy are often set apart. Thus the ground is more or less prepared for a systematic departmental organization of public book collections with a view to a fully differentiated service, even where neither exists at present.

### *C. The Distribution of Books*

Next in importance to a favorable arrangement of the library the student of public library mechanics would probably place the provisions for distributing the books. In so far as this depends upon patrons coming to the library, its success is much affected by the arrangement of the collection and whether or not the books may be freely examined on the shelves. Open shelves on the departmental plan make access as simple and satisfactory as possible for the enquirer.

But the psychology of librarianship has gone much beyond this. It has been discovered that the successful diffusion of ideas is directly dependent on the physical convenience with which they may be obtained. If the ideas in good books are to compete successfully with those universally available in other print, they must be at least equally accessible. Reading that requires thought is not the line of least human resistance, and its chances for forming habits decrease rapidly as the physical obstacles accumulate. The librarian's object, therefore, has been to place books where people work, or pass, or can conveniently congregate to enjoy their leisure—in other words, to make the library ubiquitous, pervasive, and tempting with precisely the sort of book needed at any particular point.

The extraordinary extent to which this idea has been carried out in Cleveland has already been set forth. Not only in convenient neighborhood branches and sub-stations but in stores, factories, and public institutions of all sorts there appears the inevitable little library, thoughtfully selected for its purpose, continually refreshed by exchanges from the main collection, and carefully administered—nearly a thousand such radiators from the central plant in a city of less than one million population.

The same course is followed in many other cities. The Seattle Library places foreign language collections, together with "easy books in English," in the immigration detention quarters, where they hold

out a welcome to the delayed and usually depressed stranger. Seattle also has a little station with about 900 volumes in the public market. Books are of all classes, and borrowers of all nationalities. "Stall owners are eager for books on gardening and fruit growing, while housewives carry away the family supply of books in their market baskets with cabbages and potatoes." Sioux City, Iowa, has erected a remarkable library service in her ten hospitals. The Brooklyn Library operates a collection in the City Prison.

At Framingham, Massachusetts, a branch library, started for the Dennison Manufacturing Company, proved so successful that the Company soon took it over, and now employs its own librarians, and buys its own books. A traveling bookcase goes the rounds of the various departments and shops at the noon hour, the employees making their own choices. A small town, also in Massachusetts, happens to have its library located near the terminus of certain electric suburban lines. In planning the new library the reading-room has been cleverly combined with a waiting-room, so that the farmers and their wives can scarcely avoid the pressing invitations to take home a book.

The experience just cited has been duplicated on a larger scale at Youngstown, Ohio. During the war a temporary structure for war purposes was erected on the public square in the heart of the city, where all car lines meet. A vacant corner of this building was appropriated by the library to such good purpose that when it was removed after the war the total book circulation dropped by 80,000 volumes, though the main building was but two blocks away—up a hill. The loss has since been made good by the erection on the same spot of an attractive open-shelf room containing a few thousand books accessible day and night. To advertise the new scheme still further, if possible, the skilful librarian got all plans, material, labor, and furnishings donated directly by various interested citizens. The geographical pivot of Youngstown is now a free and busy book exchange.

The Library at Dayton, Ohio, operates a book wagon in the city. Stops are made at convenient sheltered spots and borrowers are registered and supplied. The wagon's first month's record showed more new registrations than were received during the entire year at either of the two regular branches. For several years St. Louis has had a playground book wagon that makes it possible to keep up small temporary libraries for the children at the public playgrounds during the hours when these are in use. Waltham, Massachusetts, delivers books regularly to house-bound invalids.

All of the developments just described serve to indicate the extent to which the public library is being transformed from a relatively remote and monumental institution to a tool of practical daily service by eliminating the inhibitions of distance, of red tape, and of social aloofness in order to bring the contents of books quickly and effectively to the hand of the person who needs them. The effective jibe that the public library is for people with legs, not heads, will lose its point when buildings now being planned become general. These will be compact, convenient structures of the type of the office building, designed literally for the "man in the street"—to save his time, to suit the great diversity of his needs, and to make a book his first and final resort.

#### *D. Differentiation of Personal Service*

The mechanical features of advantageous library planning and the widest possible distribution of books throughout the community are obviously of first importance for the purposes in view. A library well ordered in these respects alone could perform a worthy function. Even so, however, a certain amount of wise personal attention would be indispensable, and if the possibilities of the library as an educational institution are to be realized, the main concern clearly lies not in mechanical arrangements but in a sufficient and well-equipped personnel.

What the personal element in a modern library service signifies has been pointed out in describing the Cleveland organization; libraries elsewhere are carrying out many of the same ideas, though not always so comprehensively. With the main officers well chosen, the core of such a staff consists in the groups of selected experts in charge of various divisions of the books, and a few specialists who represent the library, as a whole, in its relations with various social groups without. The activities that these intelligence officers are carrying on in widely scattered communities are numerous and instructive.

#### *(1) General Adult Education*

With a general announcement encouraging people to "Read with a Purpose," the Chicago Library has established a Reader's Bureau that undertakes to plan personal reading curricula on any subject, and to guarantee that the books will be made available even if special purchases are necessary. This is a familiar idea made specific and practical. The initial announcement brought such a rush of applicants that the notice had to be withdrawn until the bureau should catch up. A fair

illustration of its performance is the case of a saleswoman in a china store who desired to make a study of the marks on crockery and glass ware in preparation for becoming a buyer. The bureau devoted from one to two days to making this exceptional list of material and eventually brought it together for the applicant's use. Courses so prepared are filed and become available for later use.

The "Reader's Assistant" in the Detroit Library is doing work somewhat similar to that in Chicago. This office reports that "the constant demand is for help in filling up deficiencies of education."

The Newark, New Jersey, Library puts the idea of self-education into a folder of Wallingford pattern: "Get Wise Quick." It is addressed to young people, and part of it reads as follows:

"When a boy or girl leaves school and goes to work, how can he get wise? That is, how can he, having left all teachers, still keep on learning to be a good and useful citizen and to make his life each day more worth living?

"There are many answers to this question—there are friends who will help, and ambition and cleverness and steadiness and, once in a long while, genius, but the best of all answers is *the library*. In the building which your town has put up and filled with books—all with public money—are people, hired with public money, whose job it is to furnish you with books and journals. These people like their job very much. You can help them to make their job seem more worth while by asking them to help you get ready for a better job than you have now; to go up the educational ladder by your own efforts—by reading and study. The papers are full of advertisements of magic books and 'Courses of study,' 'systems of training,' 'salary raisers,' 'memory strengtheners,' 'personality fertilizers,' 'wisdom capsules,' and the like, which promise to make you wise, great, and rich in ten lessons at about \$3.00 per. In your library are 240,000 books. In these books lie the sum and substance of all the wisdom-getting, memory-improving, and salary-raising ideas that anybody has had since the world began."

With this folder and its excellent advice, only a part of which has been quoted here, goes a post-card already addressed to the library, on which the reader, if he is unable to go to the library himself, may check the topics he wants to "post up on"—"the more clearly and freely you tell what you'd like to study, the better help the library can give you." He states whether he desires elementary or advanced work, signs his name with his address, and returns it to the library.

The library at Grand Rapids, Michigan, goes after every boy or girl leaving school permanently with a similar folder. These individuals are doubtless the most difficult class of the population to reach. They have just been relieved from formal study, are still immature, and have little experience in self-direction. The Cleveland Library organizes such young people into clubs, thus adding a social motive to the book interest. This is the easier to do at Cleveland because as pupils they have acquired an intimacy with the library and its offerings in the course of their school routine. Both Grand Rapids and Cleveland cooperate with the evening and continuation schools in following up young readers. Chicago provides a special reading-room with a picked staff for this class of readers, and in a small hall adjoining gives illustrated lectures, talks, and readings. The Dayton Library in planning its new building proposes "that the library act as an educational clearing house for the isolated or individual students to whom such guidance would be stimulating and helpful, and seek to do it upon an organized and systematic basis as a public library function in disseminating free information."

The Milwaukee Library has sought first to meet the needs of groups already at work. After a careful analysis of the efforts in adult education going on in that city, it found that there were some sixteen agencies conducting classes and reaching approximately 30,000 persons. These agencies were classified as follows: 1. Americanization classes. 2. Educational classes of the trade unions. 3. Educational departments of stores and factories. 4. Educational clubs and organizations of the churches, and 5. Advanced students in university extensions and high school evening classes. With the first two of these groups the library management has entered into active relations, by bringing the classes to visit the main building, by explaining its use in numerous class talks, by preparing for them special collections suited to their needs, and by organizing library committees in each group or union to promote the use of library books.

A peculiarly modern type of general adult education may develop from radio broadcasting by libraries. The Pittsburgh Library sends out weekly in this manner a letter on library topics that at present would probably rank as "publicity" rather than as education.

## (2) "*Americanization*"

In cities where an active library has encountered the problem of non-English-speaking immigrants, or of English-speaking foreigners not



familiar with American institutions, a quiet but unremitting campaign of education has been in progress for many years, although the achievements of the library in providing the reagents for the ensuing transformation are probably wholly unappreciated by the public. Because of the extraordinary importance of this service to the health of American social and civic life, a somewhat detailed account drawn from a local report of the current practice in a typical center for such work is given here:

"The library in Seattle serves a community of approximately 350,000, one-third of which is foreign-born or of foreign parentage. The nationalities predominating are Scandinavian, German, Finnish, Russian, and Italian. Other nationalities represented are Polish, French, Croatian, Lithuanian, Bohemian, Greek, and Turkish. Then there is a large contingent of Jews — Russian Jews, Polish Jews, Spanish Jews, and German Jews — and an Oriental element which combined is as great as one of the major groups first mentioned.

"The library may be said to begin its Americanization work in the detention quarters of the United States Immigration Service. In recent years Russians have been arriving in ever increasing numbers, via China. They are for the most part ex-nobles, people of the bourgeois class, professional men and women, artists, musicians, and artisans. Invariably some are detained because the monthly quota is filled. Crowded into close quarters with nothing to do but wait, there is every opportunity for homesickness and depression to weaken their morale. The library by installing a collection of books here consisting of Russian and English texts — the latter composed of easy illustrated manuals, elementary civics with polyglot vocabularies, and simple stories — provides an opportunity for the ambitious to lose no time in learning about the new country, practising their English, or in hours of discouragement in finding a means of forgetting their impending difficulties in the perusal of a book in their own language. The effectiveness of this pre-entry acquaintance with the library is evidenced by the fact that it is the first institution visited by the Russians after their final admission. A leaflet of information about the library posted in the detention quarters gives full information in Russian as to how to obtain a library card, the privileges which may be enjoyed without a card, and the location of the library and all its branches.

"Those Russians who have been fortunate enough to enter the country without detention first hear of the library at the Russian church or through the Russian club, where posters of information about the library's 'easy' books, and professional and trade man-

uals, quickly lure them library-wards. At present the Russians constitute the most appealing of the city's foreign population, the majority obviously belonging to those classes destined by the present Russian government to expiate the sins of the old régime. They are destitute of all but courage, fine breeding, and a sustaining spirit of adventure, which enables Dmitry Brisgolloff—who naively writes 'Baron' before his name—to write his occupation, without self-consciousness, in a fine, cultivated hand, 'Cleaner of offices,' and a poetic-looking youth whose hands have heretofore wielded only brush and palette, to ask with eager curiosity before filling in 'occupation' on his application blank, how to spell 'dishwasher.' Engineers, ex-Royal Opera singers, lawyers, and architects kneel humbly before the shelves of 'Easy books for foreigners,' in desperate search of the one text which will most rapidly initiate them into the mysteries of the new language, or they lose all sense of time, place, and the immediate difficulties of life, as they pore over some old favorite from the Russian shelves. Seattle, in spite of its large population, is still a rather crude western city, affording little scope for the employment of the intellectual and cultural talents of these ex-patriates, so that sooner or later they are swallowed up in the factories and bound down by menial occupations. Only in the library do they find escape from cruel actuality, and whenever they can snatch a bit of leisure there one finds them studying diligently either an English grammar or a vocational text.

"The Scandinavian element of this flourishing town presents no problem. One finds Danes, Norwegians, and Swedes in every night-school class. Sturdy, industrious, and ambitious, they constitute one of the most reliable of the foreign elements of the city, making use of every school and library facility in qualifying for a place in the ranks of the progressive farmers, skilled mechanics, or competent merchants. They adapt themselves more quickly, perhaps, than any other nationality to American conditions, though they rarely voice their approval of them with the same flattering enthusiasm as the Italians and Greeks, who, on the other hand, are slower to adjust themselves. None are so active as the Scandinavians in bringing recruits to the library, in advertising its resources, in following its suggestions with regard to naturalization preparation.

"The Italians and Greeks, again unlike the Scandinavians, must be enticed to the library. They rarely come of their own accord, but always respond with that graciousness which is characteristic of southern peoples, to the invitation extended them through the night schools or their own societies. Once apprised of the Italian collection, the free afternoon classes for foreign women held in some of the branch libraries, and the 'easy books' which they may borrow gratis, they become regular visitors.

"The German and French population of Seattle is hardly distin-

guishable from the native population. They constitute important cultural elements of the city, are for the most part naturalized or in the process of naturalization, and, on the arrival of immigrant fellow-countrymen, take it upon themselves to introduce them to the library's Americanization resources.

"The other nationalities composing the major and minor groups to be found in Seattle are usually first reached through the night schools. Once during every term the librarian in charge of 'Americanization work' visits the evening classes for foreigners held in the public schools. When this custom was first begun, not a few teachers protested that it would be a waste of time for the librarian to speak to the pupils because the latter had only a meagre vocabulary of monosyllabic words acquired from primers and first readers, and could not possibly understand anything in the nature of a speech made to them. Time has proved their error, for in all the years these visits have been made, not one class has failed to respond in the person of at least half of its members. A new face, a new voice, and a message addressed to them as individuals rather than pupils, is bound to stimulate an interest in adult pupils ever on the alert to make practical application of any new knowledge. Invariably, the librarian, entering the close, chalk-laden air of the schoolroom, has seen the tired faces of the Beppos and Johanss, the Ivans, Ingas, and Sophies, light up at the prospect of a diversion; their bodies, drooping in their cramped seats with weariness from the day's toil, straighten up, the whole atmosphere become electrified with attention, as the library's importance to them is set forth in carefully chosen, simple words, and an invitation extended to visit it. There have always been venturesome spirits present in every class who have seized the opportunity to talk, and the shyer ones have been encouraged to do so by the librarian's addressing them—they are always recognizable—personally. In the course of the next few days after such a night-school visit, there is a steady stream of night-school pupils, asking for the visiting librarian by name, with the touching faith that they are remembered. Since an extended hand, accompanying a broad or a shy smile, always indicates a night-school pupil, they are never disappointed by not being recognized. This return visit provides the librarian with an excellent opportunity for a personal talk. The visitor is drawn out into telling something about himself or herself, books are discussed, particularly favorite writers in the other's language, with a view to finding out whether the library may not have them in English; specific titles of easy books are recommended; the 'Americanization Collection,' consisting of civics manuals, histories of the new country in easy English, and biographies of the foreign-born whom America now proudly claims as her own, is introduced. The visitor is assisted in

registering, and, departing with one or more carefully selected books, is also provided with a leaflet of information about the library with the recommendation to pass it on to some less Americanized countryman. The library has these leaflets in thirteen different languages, and it rarely occurs that a foreigner comes to the library who cannot be furnished with one in his own language, should he be unable to understand English.

"The next most successful contact with the alien dwelling in Seattle comes through the Naturalization Office, where the examiner, on the conclusion of his interrogation, gives the applicant for citizenship a card of introduction to the library. The applicant learns from this that he may borrow books freely from the public library, which will aid him in preparing for his naturalization examination. On presenting the card at the library he is at once introduced to the textbooks for aliens and similar texts, which give him often his first real understanding of the seriousness of the step before him. The librarian's personal interest in finding him the most desirable book and the friendly character of the service extended him, often act as a salve to his self-esteem which has been wounded by the quick, sharp, official queries put to him in the busy office of the naturalization examiner.

"All the foreign organizations in Seattle aid the library in its Americanization work. There are some 20 organizations, not counting churches, which keep their members apprised of all such matters desirable and advantageous for prospective citizens to know. Such information is obtained from the library and posted in their club quarters, together with library lists and current community activities and appeals. The library had striking evidence of their community spirit when the American Library Association made its drive for an enlarged program, some years ago. Among the foreign organizations sending contributions to the Seattle Library was a small Croatian society whose members are mostly fishermen. One of their leaders brought in seventeen dollars, voluntarily contributed by individual members, who were in the habit of using the library.

"The foreign press likewise gives freely of its space to library news. There are published in Seattle eight foreign newspapers, the most important of which are the Scandinavian, the Italian, the German, the Yiddish, and the Greek. They barely make their publishers a living, for as soon as a foreigner learns to read English he *prefers* an English newspaper, but for the newly-arrived immigrant, the newspaper in his mother-tongue is a godsend. In it he gets his first information about what is expected of him in the new country, his duties and privileges. He may miss the sign painstakingly displayed in shop windows and nailed to telegraph poles, informing the reader of the evening classes in the public schools,

for foreigners. Since it is printed in a language he has not yet learned to read, he passes it unwittingly by. When he reads it in his own language in the foreign press, however, he hastens, as a rule, to take advantage of it. There, too, he reads of the free classes held in certain branch libraries for foreign women, and of the books of interest and importance to new citizens, which he may obtain gratis at the public library.

"In the Foreign Division of the Seattle Library there stands on the librarian's desk a bulletin board labeled 'World contacts' for which all the library's foreign clients are invited to bring clippings. Any honor or distinction bestowed on a former countryman of a New American by the country of his adoption, pleases the adopted citizen, who feels that he is made thereby more acceptable to his new country; and, vice versa, no native American feels greater pride than the New American when honor is extended to America by a foreign land. This bulletin board often proves the starting-point of active library Americanization work, for it frequently happens that a foreigner presenting an item to post, enters into a conversation with the librarian which reveals on the part of the former so keen an understanding and appreciation of the library's aims with respect to the foreign element that an invitation is extended him to represent the library among his fellow-countrymen, with a view to acquainting those who are not already familiar with the library's program, with the service it stands ready to extend prospective Americans.

"Of special interest and value to the educated immigrant are the lists compiled by the Seattle Library of the books to be found in the library translated from foreign languages into English and from English into foreign languages. It takes infinite pains and patience to read a book in this duplicate order, yet many with only a meagre stock of English prefer this laborious method, which may yield an occasional literary pleasure, to conning the 'easy' books, whose subject matter too often fails to appeal to the adult mind.

"The foreign collections are, of course, the main drawing-card in attracting foreign-born readers to the Seattle Library. The 'Americanization Collection,' however, consisting of easy readers, easy civics, elementary United States histories, simple biographies and autobiographies of the foreign-born who have won distinction in this country, imperceptibly weans them from their native literatures, whose readers are replenished by newcomers. It is in a word, the 'Americanization Collection' which serves the foreign reader as a kind of spring-board into the other divisions and departments of the library."

### (3) *Lectures*

The extensive activities of the Cleveland Library staff in giving lectures and book talks have already been noted. Among these a regular feature is a series of 45-minute discussions of recent books, given at the central library and often repeated before classes and clubs. The Los Angeles Public Library is one of many others that does the same thing. In a recent year the head of its general literature department gave a hundred talks and book reviews before clubs and schools.

The Grand Rapids Library is a conspicuous illustration of those institutions that conduct considerable courses of lectures with outside speakers. The last series included a popular group of lectures on "American History since the Civil War." Over 5000 listened to the series, not counting some 30 well-attended lectures at the branches.

The New Bedford, Massachusetts, Library has for a long period followed the plan of holding regular Monday afternoon talks on literary topics by local men and women. Printed announcements of these topics list in each case the books that the library has to offer on the subject. At Regina, Canada, the library has combined this plan with a literary forum for general discussion, the effect of which has been very beneficial to the library's circulation and prestige. One of the by-products has been the formation of a company of Community Players to study and produce good plays.

### (4) *Clubs*

The promotion of library clubs for young people requires the constant assistance and supervision of a library officer. Adult clubs, on the contrary, while they make frequent use of some form of library service are chiefly attracted by the auditorium and club-rooms that many libraries afford. The use of the library in this manner reacts favorably on the circulation of books and on reading-room attendance, and is to be justified also because of the fine standing that it gives the institution in general public opinion.

The St. Louis Library is an excellent example. Its policy is clear and concise: "The library stands for no propaganda but seeks to house all opinions; it makes no obvious attempt to reform or 'uplift.'" The purpose and character of the meeting are agreed upon by the club's officers and the librarians, and thereafter a wide freedom is permitted. On these terms the library is host to school clubs, groups of foreigners of many nationalities, women's clubs of all kinds, mothers' clubs, parlia-

mentary classes, socialists, religious meetings, dance clubs and classes, political clubs and meetings, and musical organizations.

Clubs with a definite library motive exist in Syracuse, in certain Kansas towns, and perhaps elsewhere under the name of "Friends of Reading." There is a loose organization or none at all, the notion being to emphasize the single idea: Read good books. Occasional meetings with invited speakers and discussion, service for the local library, and similar activities indicate the possible usefulness of such a supporting organization for libraries, much as the parents' associations now seek to understand and to aid their schools.

### (5) *Schools*

As a few cities have discovered, the rational relation between schools and library is one of complete interdependence and coöperation. Fairly considered, the library and its organization represent the community educational establishment in all of its branches; the elementary and secondary schools are its apprentice shops, and the youth who passes from school without acquiring the skill and habit of using his library for both pleasure and knowledge has been woefully mistaught.

This fact made such an appeal to the Omaha Technical High School, that it has completely revised the customary high school organization to remedy the situation. Eighty-five per cent of its 3000 or more pupils go directly into industrial life. Its new arrangement is intended to guarantee that its graduates shall first of all know how to use books. The essential innovation is the provision and equipment in a new building of spacious reading and study rooms served by an open-shelf library of 12,000 volumes with five trained librarians and ample student assistants on call daily, including Saturday. Class work is organized with the library as a nucleus, and pupils are not only fully instructed in its use, but also given a regular and frequent period for browsing or for supplementary reading.

An example of good school library organization on a small scale is Pine Island, Minnesota, a village of less than 1000 inhabitants. Here the public library and the school library have combined, sharing the costs of administration and new acquisitions, and making it possible to use the joint institution as a school library throughout. With 3500 volumes, the total circulation has been 17,600, or five withdrawals per volume per year—a turnover that is exceptional.

When circumstances are made favorable, that is, when books are con-

venient, attractive, and well sponsored, children apparently are glad to read. The York, Pennsylvania, Library, in March, 1923, sent out 34 small collections of standard classics for circulation in the 96 city schools, grades four to eight. From March 12 to May 22 these 441 books had been drawn by an average of thirteen children to each book, a total circulation of 5799.

The Youngstown, Ohio, Library has made the same discovery in operating its scheme of reading for school credit. The School Board owns the books, but the Public Library relieves the teachers of all detail in their handling. Each pupil who enrolls for reading reads at least one book a month but not more than one a week. Each book is briefly reported on, both orally and in writing, to the teacher, who has been provided by the library with a short but comprehensive synopsis of it. A certificate is given by the library at the end of the year for reading ten or more books. Under this arrangement more than half of the children of Youngstown in grades three to eight are earning certificates. Wherever the teacher seeks to interest the children in the books, and discusses them with sympathy, the scheme has had remarkable results.

A regular feature of the Indianapolis Library is a vacation reading contest. Graded and annotated lists are distributed. From these in the summer of 1923 nearly 10,000 volumes were chosen, read, and briefly reported on. Ten acceptable reports earn a diploma and a membership in the library reading club. The Indianapolis Library finds, by the way, that parents who will not come to the library can be reached by putting a few adult books into the small school collections.

A free county library organized for school purposes is a revelation to those not familiar with the practice in California. The Kern County Library began its work with schools in 1916. There are about one hundred schools in this county, which is just north of Los Angeles and is about the size of the State of Massachusetts (8000 sq. m.). The schools vary from large city schools to one-room buildings far off in the mountains or desert. Each has a minimum fund of \$25 per teacher with which it may contract with the county library for service. To each school, regardless of size, the library sends all the supplementary books on all subjects in the course of study for the use of each pupil, and desk books for the teacher; the actual text-books are provided by the state. Books in arithmetic, agriculture and nature study, music, art, fire prevention, morals and manners, hygiene, physical education, manual training and



home economics, are all furnished in the quantities demanded. Dictionaries are supplied, the unabridged for the schoolroom, and smaller editions for the desks of the pupils. Special collections are provided for each of the school supervisors, and books are sent out for the home instruction of children too remote from any school to attend one. As many as 16,586 books were sent to the schools alone, in the three weeks of September after school opened.

Besides the books, periodicals for teacher and pupil are subscribed for and sent directly to the school. Sets of maps and globes are provided, together with charts, word cards, phonetic element cards, and such other devices as may be desired. Stereograph collections in various sizes, with special groups for various countries and industries, and music records in large numbers are issued. In one county last year every school had two "music appreciation contests," in which twenty of the best records obtainable were used.

Such long range service is kept in true vigor only by the constant activity of the library personnel. The children's librarian, in this case, visits each school, talks with teacher and pupils, discusses stories and books with them, and makes selections accordingly. Next to the employment of a good teacher, it is probable that nothing could contribute more to equalize school opportunities than a library service of this nature.

#### (6) *Hospitals*

Library service in hospitals has until recently taken the helpful, but merely imitative form of a collection for the use of the nurses. During the war, however, the value of suitable reading as a therapeutic agent was revealed with such force as to revolutionize ideas on the subject, and many libraries have since sought to develop an organized book service for patients in community institutions. The Sioux City, Iowa, Library has been one of the pioneers in originating hospital book wagons for use in the wards, in preparing bibliographies for guidance in varying kinds and stages of convalescence, and in training librarians qualified to handle the peculiar and difficult problems encountered in finding the best book for a given case. With due precautions as to contagious diseases and the fumigation of all books, almost 20,000 volumes were distributed to the bedsides of patients in the ten Sioux City hospitals last year, and more than 21,000 visits were made by the library staff.

*(7) Prisons*

Prison libraries are still in their earliest stages. It is only just becoming clear that the safest and most fruitful treatment for a criminal is, if possible, to change his habit of thought, and that, in spite of the large subnormal and illiterate element among those in confinement, the skilful use of books is one of the best means to this end. About 90 per cent of the prison population have never gone to school beyond the eighth grade; consequently the books must be appropriately selected. With such care and attention as is given the same type of reader in the good library, the indications are that prisoners would improve their opportunities to the utmost.

In the library of the Sherborn Reformatory for Women, at Framingham, Massachusetts, the women are freely admitted to the shelves, and are allowed to remain in the room and read the books. This unusual liberty has worked out most successfully in this institution.

The admirable coöperation of the officials of the City Prison of Brooklyn has made it possible for the Brooklyn Public Library to render there a finer service than prison authorities have usually permitted. The following excerpt is from a recent report:

"It is at the noon exercise period that the librarians pay their weekly visit. On a table at one end of the long corridor between the cell tiers the books are displayed while the men are at liberty in the corridor. The prisoners who desire books make their own selection, and are allowed to take as many books as they wish. Two librarians are at hand to help when needed in the selection of the books, and to care for the clerical routine. This routine is made as simple as possible, only the most rudimentary registration and charging system being used. The registration — merely name and cell number — gives the librarian an opportunity for acquaintance with the prisoner, and provides a natural opening for him to ask her help if he desires it.

"A more diversified set of tastes would be hard to find in any public library even of the largest size. From the college graduate who wishes to make use of his enforced leisure by reading the Greek classics in the original, to the Chinaman who, begging in broken English for 'book in Chineese,' seems doomed to disappointment until a happy thought of the librarian sends him away with gleaming eyes and bowing profuse thanks with a copy of the *National Geographic* filled with pictures of China clasped in his arms, the men, one and all, are eager for books. The lack of formality in routine, combined with the stimulus provided by the sight of so many of their better-educated comrades availing themselves of the

privilege, results in applications for books from even the most illiterate of the prisoners, men who, under normal circumstances, would never enter a public library.

"Many foreign seamen find themselves in trouble for small offences as soon as they reach these shores. This is due in part to their lack of knowledge of the language. Here is an opportunity, or rather an obligation, which the library has not been slow to accept. Books on civics, simple American histories and books on English for foreigners are provided, and are in constant use. The chief difficulty is to find books in language simple enough for the foreigners. As it is impossible to furnish books especially written for each language encountered, it is necessary to provide books, whenever possible, where the English word appearing under its appropriate picture makes the use of the book possible for the foreigner ignorant of even one word of English.

"In addition to the regular recreational reading there has developed from the first a steady demand for textbooks of different sorts, histories, especially American histories, arithmetics and especially technical books of all kinds, the men in many cases realizing that their enforced leisure may be put to advantage for their future good."

Such are some of the more exceptional phases of library activity requiring in each case the attentive administration of experienced and skilful persons. In addition there may readily be distinguished certain special information services, if that term may be thus limited in an institution whose whole function it essentially describes.

#### (8) *Special Information Services*

These are of three general types, of which the first is naturally by far the most important and extensive. It consists in advising the individual citizen either by personal card, group notice, newspaper listings, or public bulletins of some sort, that specific books or information, in which he is believed to be interested, are at his disposal. Many libraries have personal lists as already noted in the case of Pittsburgh; the "interest file" of the Portland, Oregon, Library, and the "hobby" lists of the Indianapolis Teachers' Library follow the same principle. Large use is made of professional groups, unions, clubs, and so forth, to reach the individuals composing them. Several libraries clip the vital statistics in the newspapers for suggestions as to mailing notices of good books on care of infants and home-making in general. The Indianapolis Library depends heavily on an enormous series of multigraphed book-lists—

concise, helpful, interesting, attractive, and varied. These lists are addressed to definite tastes or occupations. They are used as

“stuffers in packages, correspondence and pay envelopes; as enclosures in theatre and convention programs; as stimulators accompanying library and educational talks, as reminders of library service at luncheons and throughout the schools; as bookmarks and guides to better reading at the libraries, etc., etc. They are distributed from ‘Take one home’ tables in the library and its branches, and are placed in all sorts of places, from cigar stands to bank counters.”

The analysis of community interests with relation to the library that an extensive service of this sort presupposes has only just begun, and is susceptible of enormous development. In the case of the great majority of the men, women, and children, if they can for some purpose be brought even occasionally to a center where books are used and valued, their attachment is likely to follow, and the influence of the library as a disseminator of ideas becomes immense. Everything depends upon the skill with which personal contacts are made and followed up, and success requires a large and capable staff.

A second type of information service is largely a matter of social convenience—a sort of first aid to the public; but its value in fixing attention and in habituating enquirers to depend upon the library as an unflinching community resource is considerable.

For this purpose the library prepares itself to give all sorts of current information not requiring extensive book reference and including fugitive local items. It keeps a complete up-to-date directory of all events going on in the city day by day, as at St. Louis. It knows all the clubs and organizations of the vicinity, their officers and activities, as at Newark, New Jersey. Here, too, is a list of local halls and auditoriums available for various purposes; even an inventory of local speakers and the subjects with which they deal. One provides free notarial service. A bureau of this sort at Boston has telephone and street directories of the nearby cities and towns, railway and steamship time tables and guides, town and road maps, and catalogues of schools and colleges. Its files contain many features of special interest, such as the vocational file,

“which consists of some 250 folders each containing information—clippings, school catalogues, pamphlets—in regard to a particular vocation and the means of becoming fitted for it; the Con-

gressional file, with material on important matters before Congress; the current events file with material on outstanding events assembled for the use of students; and other similar material."

Facilities of this kind are the outgrowth of an altered conception of a public library's function. Instead of the library becoming a place of storage for certain traditional bodies of knowledge contained in books merely for their own sake, it becomes the warehouse and market exchange for all permanently important or temporarily useful information, in whatever form, that a given community may find to its advantage; in place of a remote temple of occasional and select learning, the enquirer finds a busy center of practical community affairs, attracting every one by its convenient supply of some practical detail that he must have, and eventually holding him by its constant suggestion of the more significant knowledge that will extend his horizon. Residents of cities where diverse railroad facilities converge without exception at a central point realize how greatly this fact alone simplifies and economizes one important aspect of life; a trip to the coast or to a suburb falls into the same well-known formula. An identical release from confusion would apparently result, were a city to assemble at some handy point the material for its actual current mental needs, however trivial, and organize it, together with that substantial knowledge that suits its more occasional requirements, into a consistent whole, instead of fumbling for it in a dozen quarters as at present. In that case, for either stranger or citizen a trip to the library would unlock the whole combination. This again is mainly a problem of efficient personnel.

A third type of information service is devoted to telling the public what in general the library is and can do. This is an important part of "publicity" as the modern library understands it, and much has been made of it. Quite probably something of the sort will always be valuable up to a certain point. Reminders of the library's offerings inserted in factory pay envelopes, or sent out from stores with monthly statements; display cases of books on the street or exhibits in shop windows, in banks, at fairs, or at festivals; signs and posters of every sort; personally conducted visits of groups and classes through the library,—these and many other devices, some of them exceedingly ingenious, have doubtless proved useful in arousing momentary attention.

The danger in some of these measures is that they are easily imi-

tated and may be employed when the library itself is in no position to make good the expectations thereby excited. It is emphatically true of a library that the person who goes out thoroughly satisfied is the most compelling advertisement that exists, and will increase circulation so rapidly as to render most other "publicity" unnecessary. The patron is the only honest measure of service. Unfortunately, he too often is like the stranger who declared: "I went into the library but could n't get the thing I wanted; they told me to look in that index-thing and find a number; so I came out, and I'll never go into the place again." It is one thing, and an easy thing, to advertise; it is a wholly different thing so to prepare and administer a group of services relating to ideas that a large majority of the applicants shall be dealt with to their obvious and conscious advantage, — shall receive more than they anticipated. This requires no advertising, but it cannot be done without a highly developed personnel.

#### *E. Library and Inter-Library Extension*

The foregoing evidences of progress in library administration have chiefly concerned the situation in centers of population, where contact with the books may usually be had at first hand. It is disconcerting, however, to discover that less than one-half of the population of the United States have direct access to centers where a good library service could possibly exist. Small towns, villages, and the entire rural population are thus summarily cut off from a privilege that is fundamental to their welfare, unless means can be found to extend these opportunities.

The early notion was that this could be done by multiplying small libraries, and nothing has so completely demonstrated the real nature of the library problem as the history of this policy. Some value, of course, has inevitably attached to the mere fact of a small collection of books accessible free of charge as seldom as once a week. But the idea that the rural library would, in any considerable number of cases, of itself do relatively as good a job as the city institutions has proved to be completely mistaken. Even one thoroughly good librarian and his minimum equipment are beyond the financial resources of these small centers, and without that personal element the positive usefulness of a library is relatively small.

In order to bring this indispensable factor of intelligent library service within reach, not only of small groups, but also of the detached

farmer, measures of two sorts have been undertaken. One of these is the building up of a state library express and postal service, whereby individuals anywhere in the state may secure either single books, or small collections of books, at the cost of transportation one way. On this plan the State of Wisconsin has worked up and now maintains a simple, but extraordinarily efficient system of deliveries from a central library at Madison. Choosing from a large variety of lists extending even to important professional groups, such as medical works, the applicant may state his needs with any explanations that he desires to add. These receive the careful attention of expert librarians at the central office and, if the reader be a serious student, what sometimes approaches a correspondence course in the particular topic in hand is shortly under way.

The other plan is the so-called county-unit scheme, now in full operation in California, and considered by students of library problems the country over to be the ideal type of organization for rural and small urban book service. California counties are imperial in their dimensions, but that fact gives all the more reason to believe that smaller, better settled, and more closely knit areas in eastern states could profit by this large scale demonstration.

Forty-two California counties are now functioning as units for library purposes, each with a trained and thoroughly experienced professional head. These forty-two central libraries operate through about 4000 branches so strategically placed as to serve the whole population. The accessions number more than 2,000,000 volumes, and the total service involves a joint county expenditure of over a million dollars annually.

The revolutionary results obtained from such a system are apparent in its service to the schools already described (see page 48). The individual citizen and his family are quite as thoroughly provided for. Not only are the books in the local county at one's disposal: the books in all of the counties are catalogued at the State Library, which itself has large independent resources, and by a system of county interchange, any book in any county may be procured from the library that has it.

The organization of a county library may be judged by an example from a neighboring state, where this type of institution is in successful operation. The Umatilla County Library, at Pendleton, Oregon, serves ten branches in surrounding towns and sixty-eight rural stations scattered over the county, some of them sixty miles away. A county board of five members handles affairs at the central library and directs the

policies of the local system. Each town where a branch has been established has a local board that arouses interest in the branch and attends to local matters. The central library keeps in close touch with the branches by constant interchange of books, personal service of the trained staff, and reference work by letter and telephone.

### 3. CONCLUSION

The foregoing sketch of the educational activities being currently undertaken by public libraries is sufficient indication that these institutions are successfully embarking on a career of most remarkable significance. That a free community book exchange is destined to be transformed into an active intelligence center through the addition of a competent staff of scholars trained in fitting books to human needs, is an idea as dimly perceived to-day as was the free library itself seventy-five years ago. Nevertheless, could the new features that have just been described be combined in one city, the result would be an institution of astonishing power,—a genuine community university bringing intelligence systematically and persuasively to bear on all adult affairs. If duplicated from city to city and organized on a regional or county basis for rural and semi-urban districts, it would immediately take its place as the chief instrument of our common intellectual and cultural progress. The true educational establishment of a town or city would in that case center in the public intelligence organization with its many branches whereby needful information would be marshaled primarily for adult use. The elementary and secondary schools would be the subsidiary feeders for the greater institution, serving the special needs of the young citizen, and training him for progressive self-education in the larger environment.

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### III

#### THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION AS AN AGENCY FOR THE PROMOTION OF LIBRARY SERVICE

THE common interests of active library executives brought them into professional coöperation at an early date. The American Library Association will be fifty years old in 1926—a half century of whole-hearted devotion to an absorbing social purpose.

##### 1. LIBRARIANS AND THEIR PROFESSION

To a layman a consideration of the personnel of this body of public servants is both instructive and inspiring. The profession doubtless makes its initial selection among persons of fine and gentle tastes, though in proportion as the passive traditions of an earlier day prevail, the traits of a bookish recluse or even of the insipid and forceless dilettante may predominate. But the active spirits of the library world to-day are of another sort, and of such naturally is its organization. When one is consumed with an ardent apostleship for the modern "library idea," apparently little else matters. Its votaries claim to control human progress through education, and they radiate the glow that arises from the innermost satisfactions of a high public service.

As compared with other idealistic professions, such as the ministry or public instruction, that of librarianship in the modern sense has great advantages. The spectacular platform life of the clergyman invites, indeed almost compels, a pose that seems frequently to harden or to distort character, while the teacher's constant dealings with the immature and his convenient dependence upon authority almost inevitably weaken his performance. The habitual activities of the modern public librarian, on the other hand, exhaust themselves in pure service of a high order voluntarily sought by every age and grade of individual for almost every public and private purpose—a service rendered without pose or pressure, solely on its merits. Indeed, these officers are so characteristically self-effacing that the agency through which they operate gains too little of the popular credit on which its growth depends. Such an occupation sufficiently prolonged with active initiative can hardly fail to bring out the best qualities of its participants.

It is probably true that to a critical eye the service of the average public librarian appears inadequate, but this relative ineffectualness

may be due quite as much to the fact that his task is herculean, as to deficiencies in his personal equipment. A university president held accountable for an expert knowledge of the entire curriculum might reveal similar shortcomings. To be effective, every library contact with a patron must satisfy a concrete and usually unique demand; it must be authoritative in matter and winning in manner. With a sufficient number of competent colleagues at his command, a chief librarian's service might much more nearly measure up to his opportunity. It is to this ideal of service and to the means for its achievement that the American Library Association has devoted its efforts.

## 2. NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

The Association has at the present time over 6000 members, probably representing less than one half of the 9000 libraries of all kinds now in operation, but including the great majority of the executives and heads of divisions in the larger institutions, public, private, and collegiate, as well as practically all state library authorities throughout the country. There is no question that the group has from the beginning represented the unified leadership of the entire library profession, and does so to-day. Its solidarity is remarkable, when it is considered that executives of college and university libraries, of highly specialized technical collections, and of public institutions, large and small, have greatly diversified problems and requirements. A consciousness of the many common elements in their several undertakings appears to have fused its members into a single efficient professional agency in striking contrast to the cleavage characteristic, say, of the teachers' associations with which it is most easily compared.

The motive power within the organization is furnished by a full-time paid executive secretary and staff working under the supervision of a slowly changing executive board. A council of one hundred and twenty-five members meets twice each year, and determines the policies of the organization. Officers and members of the council, with the exception of an *ex-officio* group, are chosen by the Association at large at its annual meeting. The routine work of the Association is done by the office staff, but most of the constructive study and research is performed voluntarily by the members themselves through nearly fifty committees. The work and reports of these committees constitute a continual exchange of ideas and experience to the great advantage of the

whole Association. It is a united profession, industriously at work in a systematic and coöperative fashion on its professional problems.

### 3. SCOPE OF THE ASSOCIATION'S ACTIVITIES

The scope of the present work of the American Library Association has been determined by a crowding evolution that it has been able to follow only at great distance. The ideas behind it are so new and so significant that it naturally requires time and pressure to give them shape. In face of the insistent demand its activities appear modest, yet it has clearly discerned, and to the limit of its present financial resources embarked upon, all of the essential functions of such an organization. These require a brief analysis.

#### *A. Preparation of Library Material*

What may eventually prove to be the primary and most extensive function of a central library organization is that of a service agency providing for all libraries material, usually printed material, which all need and must possess in order to do effective work, but which cannot be supplied at home, except in the largest libraries, owing to the prohibitive cost of originating it. The needs of libraries, though varying superficially in different localities, are fundamentally identical in their nature, and could in great measure be successfully supplied from one source. This identity of problem has the great advantage of making professional experience at one point useful everywhere, so that a central agency, dealing in the carefully analyzed experience of its coöperating membership, would give far more effective service and advice than any but the largest local institutions could hope to arrive at independently.

#### *(1) Technical Aids*

The material in question is mainly of two kinds. The first is technical matter relating to the proper conduct of the library itself— aids in book selection and buyers' guides, indexes, studies in library economy such as library legislation, building, organization, and administration, books on classification, cataloguing, and repair. All of these, because they are the outgrowth of long country-wide experience, and are continually changing with changing conditions, are indispensable to an efficient administration.

A specialized and pressing need for such material exists in the library schools and training classes. These are now conducted almost without texts, owing to the practical difficulty of getting the large and increasing body of library science and experience well analyzed and organized for instruction. Such books as exist are largely the result of the coöperative effort of the Association.

Technical service to libraries might be almost indefinitely extended both in existing forms and in wholly new directions. To cite but one illustration out of many: In large libraries it costs, by the usual methods, from 25 cents to \$1 or even more per volume to get books selected, purchased, accessioned, classified, catalogued, and otherwise ready for the reader. If handled at one or more central points, this work could be done with an enormous saving in both time and money. Book selection has been the jealously guarded prerogative of the librarian and his assistants, and has taken much of their attention. It is easy to believe, however, as many librarians do, that at least half of any library's book fund could be as wisely and more promptly invested by a competent authority like that in charge of the Association's "Book List," in books that any library of a given size should have, leaving the remainder to be locally selected in view of the special needs of the community. The library staff would thus be freed somewhat for its more difficult task of distribution.

### (2) *Interpretive Material for the Reader*

The second kind of printed material includes that whole body of matter the purpose of which is to assist the enquirer, whatever his need or condition, in making good use of ideas organized in print. In so far as most libraries are concerned, it can emanate only from some central source. During the past quarter century, where the need has been clearly conceived, libraries have built up out of their experience a knowledge of the total diversified population, as scientific and reliable, so far as it goes, as anything done in the schools. This study is in its early stages, but where systematically pursued and based upon an intelligent psychology, it is taking rapid strides.

The results of observation and experiment of this sort should be made available through competent hands and should be procurable in all libraries. In the best libraries to-day much of the most helpful service to patrons is the result of skilful use of material prepared by staffs. In small institutions a single well-trained librarian by using a

contributed service of this sort can wield the influence of a great organization; without it he is like a teacher deprived of text-books, dependent on his own limited capacity and a very shallow treasury.

The product assumes an almost infinite variety of forms: posters, placards, and leaflets for all manner of information as to how ideas may be found in print at libraries, together with experienced directions for the use of various mediums for circulating such information; exhibits of library resources for many occasions; book-lists or folders telling concretely for each field or vocation, and for each grade of worker in each field, what ideas useful to him may be found in certain books, and showing the relations between books, or parts of books, on his subject; brief monographs setting forth the charm of a group of fine biographies, or pointing out an easy way into foreign literature, or appreciating a new historian; studies analyzing the content of books with relation to the peculiar needs of schools, hospitals, factories, prisons, and so forth.

The value of such material depends on the practical skill with which it is prepared. Libraries are not like school boards that have the power to inflict upon a helpless beneficiary whatever may meet their approval. The library's output to the prospective reader is in serious danger of being ignored; it must exert a genuine attraction or it fails altogether. Therein lies the inevitable corrective which keeps a body like the American Library Association as well as each library staff in positive and fruitful contact with its public. Therein, furthermore, lies also the democratic safeguard that protects the usefulness of the Association. The responsible members of the organization are public servants holding appointment usually from public boards. It is impossible that public reaction against improper use of this great service should not find an immediate echo and attention in the Association itself.

The American Library Association issues regularly various types of this material. Last year it distributed close to 700,000 copies of its publications in the skilful use of a modest budget of \$35,000. Its most important publication is the "Book List"—a monthly appraisal of new books based upon the decisions of the book committees in many large libraries, supplemented by the judgment of expert reviewers. The list so constructed is an indispensable guide to a vast number of smaller libraries and collections that are not expertly staffed. This service is partly provided from the income of a gift of \$100,000 made by Mr. Carnegie in 1902—almost the sole endowment of the Association. It

accords with his verbal wish then expressed that the proceeds go to aid small circulating libraries.

Clearly, an organization that can perform successfully a service of this kind might, through the simple extension of its editorial and publishing function alone, become supremely useful to America's vast system of libraries and other educational institutions by supplying an intelligent agency for organizing their printed materials. It should have a staff qualified to take a mass of important verified fact, say from child-welfare organizations, and as a result of its experience, to advise as to the forms of presentation best calculated to reach the largest possible public. It should have funds wherewith to command the services of the leaders in literature, art, science, and public life for such authoritative and convincing treatment of books or groups of books as would charge reading with powerful interest. It should be enabled eventually, on the basis of the demands and opportunities disclosed in library use, to plan and supervise the condensation and organization of large areas of technical knowledge for the better service of the intelligent layman, to prepare extensive indexes, bibliographies for research, studies of library resources in various fields throughout the country, and in general to become the active agent in the suitable preparation and interchange of all important ideas in print.

The other functions of the American Library Association are essentially such as contribute to make its primary service universal and effective. They will always be important, even though subsidiary.

### *B. Library Extension*

Foremost, doubtless, is the work of library extension. Approximately 50 per cent of the population of the United States to-day have no convenient access to free library facilities. The dearth is greatest in the south and certain portions of the west, as an inspection of the table on page 84 reveals, and it is worthy of mention that this regional supply of libraries correlates very closely, for whatever reason, with the indicated intelligence of the regional groups in the army draft during the late war. The ratio of registered borrowers of books ranges from more than one in three for a city like Tacoma, Washington, to a very much smaller proportion in the backward districts; the average the country over is about one in ten. Several states as yet possess no state library authority for the local promotion of library interests; in fourteen states traveling libraries are unknown.

The American Library Association labors through its officers either alone, or in close coöperation with state authorities, where these exist, to change this condition for the better. Though it answers a vast number of enquiries with encouragement and instruction as to library organization, it should be enabled to provide competent field secretaries for the purpose. As has already been pointed out, the most hopeful extension movement now in progress is the gradual conversion of small local library centers into closely knit county library systems bringing excellent book facilities to every farmer's door. Such transformations require careful demonstration and promotion. Sound relations between libraries and public schools, hospitals, prisons, foreign and professional groups, are all forms of extension which require wise and forceful effort, either originating with the Association or prosecuted with its support.

### *C. Library Personnel*

The remaining important phase of the Association's activities has to do with the development and welfare of library personnel. The problems of training, certification, placing, and professional advancement have received the critical attention of the organization for many years, and it is noteworthy that although the question of remuneration has not been neglected, it appears to have been considered with singular unanimity in terms of better service for the common cause. It is evidently difficult for the librarian, the veteran certainly, to escape infection with the missionary spirit.

The details of the various measures taken by the Association to promote personal growth in the profession need not be recounted. There is probably no group of responsible men and women which could more safely be trusted as the custodian of its own professional standards and qualifications. At its general convention in 1923, steps were taken preparatory to the creation of a library training board, the purpose of which will be to provide a certain official scrutiny and criticism for schools offering training for library work. With a professional group of this size, the questions of preparation, examination, and certification, however they may be handled, should plainly be considered not from the point of view of one or more states, but from that of the nation as a whole.

Even from this brief review of the activities of the American Library Association it will be apparent that, unlike the national organizations of some other professions, this Association is, and in the nature of

things should be, an operating concern. The opportunity for so extensive and distinguished material service resting upon the experienced guidance of a compactly organized profession is unusual. An institution of this kind with operations fully developed over the United States and Canada could profitably absorb resources equal to those of one of our larger universities in work that is already clearly indicated, and that could be done as well by no other institution.

An additional advantage of the existing organization of the American Library Association inheres in the fact that all Canadian library interests are included on equal footing with those of the United States—a feature that was especially dear to Mr. Carnegie. It would seem that the popular and widespread aspirations for a great national university that have long been current in this country might perhaps be fittingly realized in a genuine university of an entirely new character founded for the purpose of meeting conditions peculiar to the New World through the organized application of knowledge to popular adult use. Such would be the nature of an enlarged Library Association operating on the expanded program here described. In that case its continental rather than national scope would be an eloquent recognition of the essential integrity of North American ideals.

■



## IV

### LIBRARY ACTIVITIES OF ANDREW CARNEGIE AND OF THE CARNEGIE CORPORATION

#### 1. SOURCES OF MR. CARNEGIE'S LIBRARY PHILOSOPHY

WITH respect to its gifts for building libraries, the Carnegie Corporation, established in 1911, has served chiefly as the executor of the wishes of its Founder, whose confidence in this use of his wealth had for many years found an extensive, visible expression. In fact, the library gifts made through the Corporation have been less than one-fourth of the total of such grants from Carnegie funds. To appreciate, therefore, the full significance of the influences set in operation from this source for the promotion of libraries, it is necessary to consider them as the result of one coherent undertaking, which had its beginnings far back in the personal experience of its creator.

The public is not mistaken in associating Mr. Carnegie primarily with the free library institutions that frequently bear his name. The notion of free and universal access to books as the tools for the acquisition of fine and useful ideas, as well as for vocational advancement, is the contribution by which doubtless he would most willingly be remembered. Not, of course, original with him, this conception acquired new and widespread reality through the powerful aid both of his money and of his example. He devoted himself to many excellent causes in his later years, but none of them commanded the instant and instinctive approval of his own convictions as did the purpose to make democracy sound by making it intelligent; by assisting those only whose will and ability to help themselves could be depended on; and, finally, by removing from the aids for self-advancement all taint of charity.

Any review of Mr. Carnegie's library gifts would be superficial without a more than passing reference to the roots of those convictions which inevitably made such gifts the commanding feature of his program for public service.

The future apostle of free books in America was hewn from a rock whose quality he himself scarcely understood until after his own characteristic predilections had become clearly fixed. Both of his grandfathers were ardent radical sympathizers and local leaders in the period of Corn Law agitation in Scotland; one of them was a pamphleteer

of marked ability. Mr. Carnegie's father was an active participant in meetings and supported demonstrations in the same cause. Though of a strongly religious nature, he had the courage to leave permanently the ancestral church, walking out in the midst of a sermon on infant damnation because it offended his intelligence. One is not surprised to find such a man the moving spirit in a group of damask-weavers who pooled their contributions for the purchase of books, and delegated one of their number to read aloud while the others worked; or to learn that the collection so amassed became the first circulating library in Dunfermline — the home town where, in 1881, that weaver's wife dedicated the first of a long line of libraries with which her son enriched the world.

As one would expect in a daughter of Thomas Morrison, she was an incessant reader and an independent thinker in both religious and political matters. "Such is the influence of childhood's earliest associations," says Mr. Carnegie in his autobiography, "that it was long before I could trust myself to speak respectfully of any privileged class or person who had not distinguished himself in some good way and therefore earned the right to public respect. There was still the sneer behind for mere pedigree."

With this background of lively ideas the boy of thirteen ended his formal schooling, and was transplanted to the congenial soil of republican America. Here in the midst of his family's early struggles with poverty he unexpectedly came upon a ladder that he knew he could climb—books. In 1850 Colonel James Anderson of Allegheny turned his library of 400 volumes into a "Library Institute" for working boys, and attended in person on Saturdays to exchange their books. Shut out at first because, as a telegraph messenger, he had no "trade," Andrew Carnegie had the initiative to send two well-considered letters to the *Pittsburgh Dispatch*, in which the "Institute" had been announced, and finally got the category enlarged to include himself. Thus with a book continually by him as he delivered messages, he matriculated in a university that he never afterwards abandoned. Macaulay's *Essays and History*, Bancroft's *History of the United States*, and Lamb's *Essays* are cited as his particular discoveries in this collection.

The effect of this apparently minor episode on the ambitious lad must have been poignant in the extreme, for to it he invariably assigns the origin of his whole library gospel.

"The result of my own study of the question What is the best gift which can be given to a community? is that a free library occu-

pies the first place, provided the community will accept and maintain it as a public institution, as much a part of the city property as its public schools, and, indeed, an adjunct to these. It is, no doubt, possible that my own personal experience may have led me to value a free library beyond all other forms of beneficence. When I was a working boy in Pittsburgh, Colonel Anderson, of Allegheny—a name I can never speak without feelings of devotional gratitude—opened his little library of four hundred books to boys. Every Saturday afternoon he was in attendance at his house to exchange books. No one but he who has felt it can ever know the intense longing with which the arrival of Saturday was awaited, that a new book might be had. My brother and Mr. Phipps, who have been my principal business partners through life, shared with me Colonel Anderson's precious generosity, and it was when reveling in the treasures which he opened to us that I resolved, if ever wealth came to me, that it should be used to establish free libraries, that other poor boys might receive opportunities similar to those for which we were indebted to that noble man."

And in his address on Ezra Cornell he observes: "He had to borrow the books he read in youth, and only such as have had to do this can fully realize the necessity for and blessings of the free public library. They may be trusted to place it first in all their benefactions."

These remarks are not merely the sententious reminiscences of an old man: they are a creed springing from a vivid emotional as well as intellectual experience. During the twenty years at Pittsburgh, while laying the foundations of his career, Andrew Carnegie was never far from books. His phenomenal knowledge and love of Shakespeare originated mainly through the stage, but his general education, supplemented by acute observation and travel, kept pace with his financial successes, and was due in great measure to his power of getting ideas from print. His library program as later developed was a part of himself—his own ideal and experience in self-education objectified for others; it was therefore the one form of giving that he felt reasonably certain could not do harm or go wrong.

## 2. THE LIBRARY MOVEMENT SINCE 1850

The date (1850) of Colonel Anderson's generous procedure with his private book collection, of which the fifteen-year-old telegraph messenger was a beneficiary, happens to coincide approximately with the beginning of free, public, tax-supported libraries in the United States.

Earlier municipal examples are cited, such as Salisbury, Connecticut (1803), and Peterborough, New Hampshire (1833), and the notion of taxation for book purchase and library maintenance had received legislative recognition in New York State in provisions (1830) for school district libraries. Although the latter were for the use of adults as well as school pupils, and were extensively copied in other states, they had but slight success. In 1848 the General Court of Massachusetts authorized the city of Boston to raise \$5000 a year for a genuine public library, and in 1851 passed a permissive law applying to the state as a whole. The idea spread to other states, and from the establishment of the Boston Public Library in 1854, it has had a continuous and consistent, though not at first a particularly rapid, development.

The popular belief in a universal free access to good books, purchased and maintained out of public funds, appears to have been closely connected with the growth of the sense of public responsibility for universal education. The latter part of the nineteenth century witnessed the establishment of free secondary schools and state universities on a large scale, and the theory became popular that instead of leaving education to the impulse and skill of the individual in overcoming obstacles, these should be cleared from his path, and varied facilities for education, according to individual capacity, should be provided at public expense.

It is precisely this change in attitude that has created and promoted the modern "library idea." Were three successive stages of library procedure to be discerned and characterized by the prevailing philosophy underlying the free provision and use of books, we should have pronouncements somewhat as follows:

The library trustee of the early period would declare that all such privileges should be sought and paid for by those who can use them. This position was held even by such men as Herbert Spencer and Goldwin Smith, who denied that there was any greater obligation for a community to furnish free books than to supply free clothing. The permissive attitude of the middle period would take pride in the announcement that books might be consulted free of charge by those who knew what they wished to read. This was the progressive theory that commended itself to Mr. Carnegie, who as a student always knew what he wanted, and always wanted what the best books of that period had to give. In contrast to the foregoing attitude, the ideal of the modern public library is to meet every member of the community with the as-

surance that it has the books, that it has people who know the books, and that it can freely help any one find the ideas he needs. The modern library has greatly increased its resources of printed knowledge in every direction, and has entrusted these to a group of intelligent and friendly interpreters who see to it that they are made fully available.

Such a transition requires time, and is as yet far from complete. Even in 1876, when more than a hundred American librarians came together to form the American Library Association, only fourteen of them came from free public libraries. Indeed, the organization just mentioned, though consisting largely of librarians in private libraries, was doubtless the most important single factor in public library development that has come into being. It was the beginning of a true library profession, and since its founding, it has contributed immeasurably to the building up of a substantial library science and to the educating of the American public in the use of books. Guided by these new impulses and favored by social conditions, the public library movement gained continually increasing momentum, and toward the end of the century, when Mr. Carnegie launched his plan of library giving, the country was familiar with the new institution as a desirable part of its system of popular education, and required only the encouragement of conspicuous leadership to make its acceptance practically universal.

### 3. SPECIAL CHARACTER OF THE EARLY CARNEGIE LIBRARIES

This leadership Mr. Carnegie was in a position to provide. It has been noted that his first library gift was made in 1881 to Dunfermline, his native town in Scotland. The second was given in 1890 to Allegheny, the home of his adoption in America. Pittsburgh, its neighbor, in 1895 received a commodious central library building, which ten years later was greatly enlarged;<sup>1</sup> eight branch libraries had been added earlier from time to time. Meanwhile three towns, Braddock, Homestead, and Duquesne, where Carnegie industries were located, each acquired from him a sort of welfare center containing a library, but serving a somewhat broader purpose.

It is noteworthy that in all of these earliest gifts the donor appears to have had something more in mind than solely a library. Thus at Allegheny the institution includes a fine hall and organ; in the mill

<sup>1</sup> These extensions are a part of what is known as "Carnegie Institute," and are controlled by a joint board including the library trustees.

towns, lecture rooms, social rooms, gymnasiums, swimming-pools, and so forth, are provided, with the library as the nucleus; at Pittsburgh, besides the library, there are a great hall and a concert organ, an extensive collection of paintings and sculpture, and a large museum of natural history, all magnificently housed. To be sure these last were classed by Mr. Carnegie as "wise extravagancies for which public revenues should not be given." It was his notion that if space were provided, patriotic citizens would fill it.

The underlying idea pervading these several gifts was clearly that of a general community institute for art, science, literature, and music. In describing his library plan in the "Gospel of Wealth" (1889) he says: "Closely allied to the library and, where possible, attached to it, there should be rooms for an art gallery and museum, and a hall for such lectures and instruction as are provided in the Cooper Union." And as stated in a letter to the Institute at Pittsburgh: "The Gallery is for the masses of the people primarily, not for the select few." In the deed of the United Kingdom Trust he explains his hopes from libraries as popular "universities": "My reasons for selecting public libraries being my belief, as Carlyle has recorded, that the true university of these days is a collection of books, and that thus such libraries are entitled to a first place as instruments for the elevation of the masses of the people."

In so far as the developments of his day made it possible, therefore, and to a far greater extent than was then prevalent, Mr. Carnegie possessed the vision of a true community center for a comprehensive, popular education suited to all ages, and strove to make it real. A quarter of a century later, with rapidly developing provisions for popular education in libraries, in museums, and in centers of music and dramatic art, the plan seems familiar and convincing; it was far different when all of these lay in embryo, and when those who would resort to such a center were usually those who already possessed the education required to make independent interpretations of what they found there.

#### 4. NUMBER AND CHARACTER OF THE LIBRARIES PROVIDED BY MR. CARNEGIE AND THE CARNEGIE CORPORATION

The actual progress of Mr. Carnegie's library-giving constitutes an interesting record that is worthy of presentation in some detail. The diagrams on page 88 indicate year by year the buildings promised and those actually erected, together with the amount of funds promised

and the amounts actually expended, both for public and, in part, for institutional libraries in the United States and Canada. The very first public libraries given by Mr. Carnegie in the United States do not appear. They numbered fourteen in all previous to 1898, and cost a total of \$1,860,869. Eight of the fourteen were given to Pittsburgh. The promises indicated as later than 1917, when gifts for libraries were discontinued, were cases wherein an appropriation had already been determined upon, although the actual promise had not been formally made.

It was required that the community provide a site and bind itself to an annual maintenance charge of ten per cent of the cost of the building. As time went on, some supervision of building plans was found to be necessary to avoid ill-designed and wasteful construction; otherwise the appropriation was unconditional. In some states many applications were withdrawn when it was discovered that an obligation for maintenance was involved. In comparatively few cases, however, has that obligation, once assumed, been repudiated.

Not all promises were taken advantage of; and, as shown in the diagrams, the actual expenditure of funds for construction lagged, sometimes very considerably, behind the dates when the promises were made. The total amount actually expended for public library buildings in the United States and Canada reaches the sum of \$43,665,000. In addition to this, \$11,849,000 was spent in Great Britain and Ireland, and \$511,000 in other countries, making a total of \$55,655,000 from these sources directly for library purposes.

A comparison, year by year, of the relative number of buildings with the relative amounts expended, shows that a large number of small libraries were erected during the later years. Indeed, the small libraries greatly outnumber the large ones, though this fact may easily lead to a wrong conclusion. The number and distribution of public libraries according to the size of appropriation required is tabulated below. In general, the amount given was in proportion to the population, but it is plain from an analysis of the table that although many small libraries were erected, an enormously greater population is served, and undoubtedly better served, from the fewer large libraries in the larger cities.

Omitting the 36 main buildings for city systems and the 305 branches in 62 cities, it appears that 761, or over one-half (52 per cent) of the 1463 buildings cost \$10,000 or less. These were located in towns with an average population in 1920 of 3385 and served a total of 2,576,500 persons.

Buildings costing from \$10,000 to \$20,000, and located in cities with an average population of 7862, numbered 432, and served a total of 3,396,500. These first two groups included two-thirds (66.1 per cent) of all the buildings erected, and constituted 78 per cent of the total number of towns or cities having any Carnegie buildings. The total population served by these 1193 buildings costing \$20,000 or less was approximately 5,973,000, while the population served by the remaining 270 buildings in "one-building" cities numbered 8,850,000.

The relation of Carnegie libraries to the aggregate city populations in cities possessing more than one public library building is difficult to estimate exactly owing to the fact that, in certain cities, the Carnegie buildings constitute only a part of the whole system. In all of the 62 cities where such buildings are found there are 20,181,000 people.

In general, therefore, a total of at least 35,000,000 may be said to have access to library service from Carnegie buildings. This excludes any participating rural population not reckoned with the civil community, and in California particularly takes no account of the fact that many of the small-town libraries are centers of organized county library service.

Such calculations as have been attempted above naturally lead one a step further to discover what portion of the population have access to library facilities of any sort. The American Library Directory for 1923 lists 2462 towns and cities in the United States with populations of 1000 or more (1920) that have public libraries with which neither Mr. Carnegie nor the Corporation have had relations. The total population in this group comes to 23,825,500, or 22.5 per cent of the population of continental United States, which in 1920 was 105,710,620. The group of Carnegie Library towns and cities in the same area produce a total of 32,956,500, or 31 per cent. The joint total, therefore, would give 53.5 per cent of the population having access to public library facilities, usually in places having at least 1000 inhabitants.<sup>1</sup>

The inclusion of Canada (1921) with the United States gives a total population of 114,499,103. Of this total the respective groups given above are 21.8 per cent and 30.4 per cent, making 52.2 per cent. For the United States and its possessions (117,823,165) the figures are 20.4 per cent and 28.1 per cent, or a total of 48.5 per cent, and including

<sup>1</sup> The factor of greatest uncertainty in the calculations arises from this arbitrary limitation in the size of town. Sixty-three, or 4 per cent of the places having Carnegie libraries, have less than 1000 population, and it is probable that a large number of similar communities have true public libraries of which there is no record, thus extending somewhat, though probably not greatly, the proportion having access to such privileges





ER AND AMOUNT OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR LIBRARY BUILDINGS MADE BY MR. CARNEGIE AND THE CARNEGIE CORPORATION IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

STATES	\$10,000 or less	\$10,001 to \$20,000	\$20,001 to \$30,000	\$30,001 to \$40,000	\$40,001 to \$50,000	More than \$50,000	Main Bridge in City Systems	Brch. Bridges in City Systems	No. of Bridges	Amount Expended	Total No of Bridges in State	Total Amount Expended in State
Alaska	8	5	2	—	1	—	—	—	14	\$195,800 00	14	\$195,800 00
Arizona	1	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	4	64,000 00	4	64,000 00
California	79	19	9	2	1	3	—	8	113	1,436,612 00	142	1,436,612 00
Colorado	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	7	8	330,375 00	8	330,375 00
Connecticut	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	2	150,000 00	2	150,000 00
Delaware	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	3	750,000 00	3	750,000 00
Florida	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	4	57,000 00	4	57,000 00
Georgia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	2	29,000 00	2	29,000 00
Idaho	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	313,943 00	—	313,943 00
Illinois	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	2	70,000 00	2	70,000 00
Indiana	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	6	360,000 00	6	360,000 00
Iowa	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	6	81,300 00	6	81,300 00
Kansas	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	3	60,000 00	3	60,000 00
Kentucky	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	3	682,000 00	3	682,000 00
Louisiana	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	4	198,000 00	4	198,000 00
Maine	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	10	214,768 00	10	214,768 00
Maryland	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	18	2,875,000 00	18	2,875,000 00
Massachusetts	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	3	87,500 00	3	87,500 00
Michigan	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	2	137,500 00	2	137,500 00
Minnesota	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	104	1,686,200 00	104	1,681,200 00
Mississippi	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	2	2,962,084 88	2	2,508,664 88
Missouri	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	15	40,000 00	15	40,000 00
Montana	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	3	60,000 00	3	60,000 00
Nebraska	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	3	106,000 00	3	106,000 00
Nevada	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	2	1,395,706 00	2	1,395,706 00
New Hampshire	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	97	85,000 00	97	85,000 00
New Jersey	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	2	45,000 00	2	45,000 00
New Mexico	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	57	774,896 00	57	774,896 00
New York	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	2	345,300 00	2	345,300 00
North Carolina	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	8	14	450,000 00	23	796,300 00
North Dakota	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	9	30,000 00	9	30,000 00
Ohio	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	6	6	360,000 00	6	360,000 00
Oklahoma	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	17	238,860 00	17	238,860 00
Oregon	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	500,000 00	—	500,000 00
Pennsylvania	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	14	14	620,500 00	43	1,137,500 00
Rhode Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	31	60,000 00	31	60,000 00
South Carolina	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	2	150,000 00	2	150,000 00
South Dakota	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	3	263,000 00	3	263,000 00
Tennessee	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	3	75,000 00	3	75,000 00
Texas	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	52	906,950 00	61	1,655,950 00
Utah	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	9	9	760,000 00	9	760,000 00
Vermont	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	9	125,000 00	65	989,375 00
Virginia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	8	125,000 00	8	125,000 00
Washington	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	4	125,000 00	4	125,000 00
West Virginia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	3	75,000 00	3	75,000 00
Wisconsin	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	8	182,500 00	11	145,500 00
Wyoming	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	2	462,900 00	83	1,460,143 84





Canada (126,611,648), 19.9 per cent and 27.6 per cent, or a total of 47.5 per cent. In Canada alone, the grouping gives 13.5 per cent and 21.5 per cent, or a total of 35 per cent of 8,788,483.

A graphic representation of the distribution of public libraries in continental United States and Canada will be found on a series of maps prepared by Mr. Durand Miller, assistant to the Secretary of the Carnegie Corporation, and inserted in the Appendix. The first of these is an attempt to show the location of public libraries in the United States at or about the time when Mr. Carnegie began his library contributions on a large scale. The data are drawn from a list issued by the Bureau of Education in the report of the Commissioner for 1896, and said to be a list of public libraries in the United States of 1000 volumes and over in 1896. The libraries reported number 971, and it is noteworthy that in New England there are very nearly as many as appear on the other maps twenty-seven years later.<sup>1</sup>

Map II shows the 1525 places in the United States and Canada in which, up to 1924, one or more public library buildings had been provided by Mr. Carnegie, or by the Carnegie Corporation. The average appropriation to each locality was \$28,633. It is not to be supposed, of course, that the libraries indicated on Map II are all to be added to Map I. Many of them are the same collections in new buildings. Nevertheless, the increase in number during a quarter century is apparent.

Map III gives the location in 1923 of 2487 libraries, in towns and cities of 1000 population or more, that had been established and conducted wholly independently of Carnegie funds. This array also includes many of the 1896 list, especially in New England.

Maps II and III together show the existing public library strength of the country in 1924 in so far as location is concerned — an impressive spectacle, of wider import than most Americans appreciate. It seems that in more than four thousand American communities, Union and Canadian, there exists, free to the public that sustains it, a working mechanism for popular self-education, of sound pattern and susceptible of indefinite elaboration and expansion.

The distribution of Carnegie libraries shown in Map II represents

<sup>1</sup> Strictly speaking, the data on Map I are not quite comparable with those on Maps II and III, which represent collections in places of 1000 population or more, and not collections of 1000 volumes as in Map I. This difference probably tends rather to enlarge the number than otherwise, in comparison with the list based on population. Only five of the Carnegie libraries on Map II had fewer than 1000 volumes in 1896; in fact, only 62, or 4 per cent, had fewer than 2000 volumes, although some 63 were in places of less than 1000 population. It is probable, therefore, that if the first list were adjusted to the population basis of Map III, more of the 1896 listings would be cut off than there would be found omitted cases to be added.

altogether the initiative of the population in the region concerned. No offer of a library was ever made except on the request of interested parties in the community, and no effort was made at any time by the donors to influence a community in accordance with any preconceived policy. The conditions were uniform and moderate, and were administered on equal terms to all alike.

Mr. Carnegie's name has been associated with the buildings that he gave, rather by reputation, or by some memorial tablet on the structure, than by use as the name of the library. In fewer than a third (27.1 per cent) of the 1525 localities is his name so used. Twelve states with 265 Carnegie libraries do not use the name at all, and in nine others it occurs but 34 out of 387 times. On the other hand, four states with 129 libraries use the Carnegie name invariably, and in five others it is found 148 out of 169 times. There would appear to be some odd fashion at work to explain why Iowa, with 99 libraries, should always call them "Carnegie" libraries, while Indiana, with 155, should adhere throughout to the simple term "Public Library." It is needless to add that in no case was the use of the donor's name made a condition of the gift. Mr. Carnegie himself, while not refusing his name, seems definitely to have preferred that the institution recognize fully the proprietorship of the community, to which he always insisted that it be committed.

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THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES AND  
OF PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE

IT requires no formal evidence to convince even the casual observer, who is familiar with American towns and cities, that the free public library is already an accepted and cherished figure in American intellectual life. Even in its most elementary form, the symbol that it affords compensates largely for the practical service that it has not yet learned to accomplish. The situation that it now presents raises questions not as to its worth, but solely as to the direction and character of its growth.

In the earlier pages of this study an attempt was made to describe some of the many problems involved in bringing about the adequate diffusion of knowledge throughout a society constituted as the American democracy is constituted; and to show that the free library, as a civic unit, is fitted, beyond any other institution that we possess, to undertake that task. Furthermore, reviewing the experience of progressive libraries, where exceptional skill and favorable conditions have made possible decisive experiments, it has been pointed out that the essential factor in enabling a library to perform this greater function is an adequately large and competent personnel. The underlying mechanism is well founded and responsive; to operate it successfully as a positive educational instrument simply requires what all education requires, namely, wise and sufficient personal direction. If this conclusion be correct, any procedure that will make it clear to the public at large, and that at the same time will create the means whereby progressive communities may be encouraged to take the steps that it suggests, will obviously render an important service to American education.

Hitherto, interest has been fixed on the establishment of new or larger library centers and the need of giving them a home. For those who are concerned with the movement as a whole, the emphasis is now shifting to another aspect of the problem. Well implanted in the consciousness of an intelligent public, the conception of the worth and appropriateness of library benefactions has aroused the pride and generosity of private donors as well as the emulation of local public authorities. A partial list of fresh funds for public libraries during the years 1918-21 numbers fifty-five, of which three were from municipal sources, seven from public subscriptions, and the remainder from private deed or bequest. The

splendid gift of \$6,000,000, recently made by private donors to the New York Public Library is one whose spirit and purpose may easily find a match in any community to which the library has become an indispensable organ of progress. It is plain that such provision for community education should henceforth be a local matter.

The need that now confronts those who have the educational well-being of the nation at heart is of a different nature. It is a need that fundamentally involves the vigor and progress of the entire library profession, and consequently of every community that it serves. Probably in no other group of professional workers is it possible, at one stroke, to reach and so profoundly to effect an important public service. This is partly because it is not a large group, partly because it is inherently a homogeneous and unified group, but largely because it is so disposed and organized as to facilitate from a common center operations of great material and practical benefit on an extensive scale. Such a situation is not so easy for individual benefactors to appreciate; it may well prove, however, to be a peculiarly suitable object of study for those who have opportunities for dealing with education as a whole.

There is set forth below a series of specific objects that must sooner or later receive attention in any adequate treatment of the problems arising with the development of the modern library movement. The ends sought are fairly revolutionary in their ultimate effect, but are of such a nature as to give assurance that relatively small investments would accomplish a wholly disproportionate share of the results desired.

The main headings contemplated in such a program are as follows:

1. A GENERAL ENQUIRY INTO THE FUNCTION, ORGANIZATION, MANAGEMENT, AND SUPPORT OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

It is a somewhat remarkable fact that throughout a period marked by frequent and more or less thorough scrutiny of educational agencies of many sorts, and of educational areas of great diversity, the public library as an agency for education on its own account should have entirely escaped critical attention, although mention is made of its relations with schools where these have been the subjects of investigation. There is the most urgent need that this great institution, which contains such unequalled promise for the future guidance and refinement of American thought, manners, and economy, should be delib-



erately and thoroughly considered. Such a study is due not only for the sake of its present managers and sponsors, but that the American public may realize the remarkable possibilities in one of the finest products of their communal activities.

The librarians themselves have realized the necessity for a study of this character, purely for the advancement and better conduct of the cause they represent. For several years they have been at work gathering the necessary facts with a view to giving them such treatment as might be possible. An enquiry of this nature should be of the broadest and most painstaking character. The intelligent sincerity of the American Library Association in going into a tedious and expensive undertaking of this sort is characteristic; if adequate support could be secured, it would doubtless welcome coopération from outside of its own professional ranks, and thus achieve a result of far-reaching importance.

## 2. A SERIES OF EXPERIMENTS AND DEMONSTRATIONS CONDUCTED OVER A PERIOD OF YEARS AND CONSTITUTING A CONCERTED ATTACK ON THE CENTRAL PROBLEM OF THE MODERN LIBRARY, NAMELY, SUCCESSFUL DIFFUSION OF LIBRARY SERVICE

The thesis of the foregoing discussion has been that a modern public library organization can completely justify its existence only by means of a diversified service that makes useful ideas contained in print helpful and easily available to all of the rational elements in the supporting population. Moreover, it was urged that in proportion as this is successfully accomplished public support for such service will be willingly accorded.

Library service in this sense is in the primitive stages of development, although the main principles of its procedure are clear enough. It is handicapped by dependence upon library staffs that are numerically quite inadequate; suitable preparation and sufficient remuneration have been the exception rather than the rule, and all are heavily overworked with the routine duties already demanded of them.

To make genuine service of a high type stand out clearly by contrast, and to explore the possibilities of readjustment in this field, certain centers should be taken for demonstrative treatment, and must be allowed funds that the average community is not yet prepared to furnish. It would naturally be the final test of the success of such new forms of service as might be devised, to discover whether, after trial, the benefi-

ciary community considered them worth supporting. As in all experimentation, however, there would be a certain proportion of failure and loss.

It is reasonably certain that the very small library cannot be successfully operated as a separate and independent unit. One of the most necessary and valuable forms of experiment, therefore, is that which will demonstrate how a satisfactory service may be organized that will enable these minor units to function to their capacity.

For this general purpose prolonged studies should be undertaken, say with a large city system; with a small center of the most frequent Carnegie type, especially if one be chosen with practically no existing service development; with one or two county library systems, particularly in the East where such forms are less familiar; with a medium-sized library in the South; and possibly with a library under peculiar conditions as to foreign, or negro population. It goes without saying that such a series of studies should be under the direct supervision of an appropriate committee of the American Library Association, which would bring together the directors of the several undertakings in a general laboratory group where constant and expert criticism would be possible. Unification would make it feasible also to employ certain functional advisers for the whole study. Moreover, the results of these varying undertakings would acquire unity and force if arrived at through certain common channels, and it would naturally be the main object of the project to bring the successful outcomes to bear as vigorously as possible upon public opinion.

### 3. ADEQUATE SUPPORT FOR THE PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION OF LIBRARIANS AND THE TRAINING OF LIBRARY STAFFS

The provision of a sufficient number of thoroughly educated and technically trained library workers under conditions suitable for a permanent career is the salient feature in a properly reorganized library service, and should receive immediate attention. It is possible to speak with added assurance on this point because of the comprehensive investigation of this subject recently made for the Carnegie Corporation by Dr. C. C. Williamson.

For many years the profession itself has fostered the training of its recruits, almost without assistance, as a part-time obligation resting upon its members, to be discharged without text-books or the most ne-

cessary aids, and at a compensation close to the vanishing-point. The work has proceeded in promiscuous fashion, here at a university and there at a library; the standards have been extremely diverse and the product of uneven value, while training for certain types of positions has been lacking altogether.

If a rapid and wholesome development is to take place in the process of adjusting libraries to their users, the most vigorous and drastic changes should be made at this point. Expert duties in libraries must be distinguished from routine duties of a purely clerical sort, and the personnel developed accordingly; full-time teachers and adequate equipment must be provided; and professional curricula for the higher, responsible positions must doubtless be associated with comparable professional curricula in the universities. It is possible, too, that the immediate situation could be greatly relieved by the opportunity for individual selection on a basis of scholarships for experienced library workers of unusual promise.

The whole problem of professional training is an involved one that could not reasonably be handled except by the profession itself. It is not unwieldy nor particularly difficult, and should certainly respond to the careful administration of the new Library Training Board recently set up by the American Library Association. Conclusions as to the number, kind, and location of schools needed, the requirements for admission, the standards of curricula and qualifications for graduations may properly be expected from such a body, and outside aid should be solicited and furnished only on its representations where these matters are involved.

#### 4. ADEQUATE RESOURCES FOR THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

It has been shown that the greatest usefulness of free public libraries is contingent upon the gradual evolution of an educational service consciously adjusted to the needs of all elements of the population. In that connection it was made clear that a large portion of such a service was nearly identical from one library to another, and that it could best be provided by the skilful use of material produced out of the accumulated experience of successful library managers in case this could be duly organized for such purposes.

Scarcely less important at the present stage is the provision of ample support in the extension and reorganization of library service and ad-

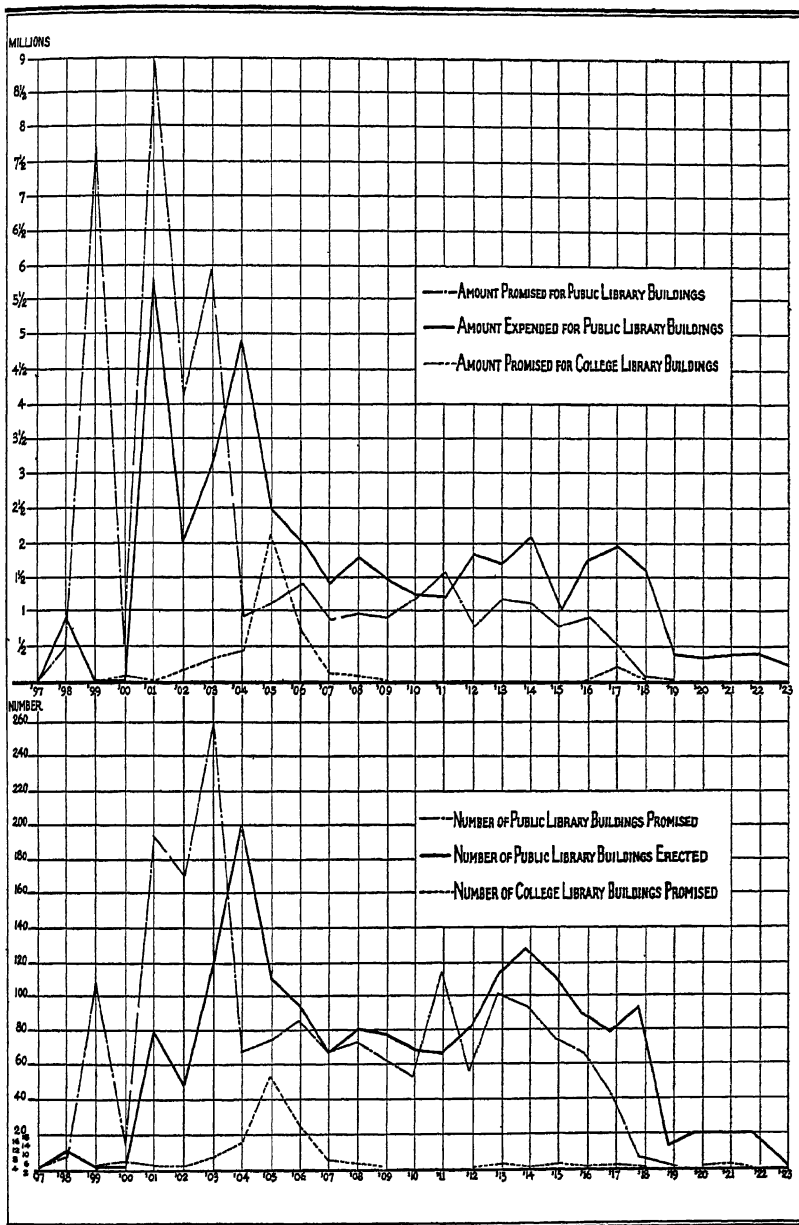
ministration at many points. The very small libraries cannot operate successfully alone. Associated with others, however, in a natural coöperative area, and making use of a service equipment provided by a vigorous central Association, they immediately become the channels of an active influence. So, too, in the matter of trained librarians. It will be years before the smaller communities can be brought to the point of providing for their population at large a library organization equal to that, say, of the high school which they now willingly maintain. Yet with the constant aid and stimulus of the central body a small, poorly trained staff can be made to yield respectable results, and will afford ready access for ideas that ultimately will transform local opinion.

In the case of medium-sized and larger libraries, the usefulness of a central source of supply and advice is almost if not quite as great. It is not a question of a standardizing agency that assists the backward but hampers and levels down the progressive units. Indeed, it is not a question of a "standardizing" agency at all, except possibly in certain aspects of training for library service. The largest and most successful organizations are to-day the Association's most staunch supporters; its extended usefulness would relieve and strengthen them immeasurably for the treatment of local difficulties that each library must handle in a different way.

A visit to the present headquarters of the American Library Association and a study of its available resources would demonstrate to any impartial observer the existence of a need and an opportunity. The Association should be adequately housed, ultimately in a building of its own; and substantial increases should be made to the endowment funds which must necessarily supplement its income from membership fees. As in all planning for the future, there is an element of risk in assigning great responsibilities to an organization that has hitherto been faithful over a few things only. On that account the Association's activities should develop in a gradual manner that should prove its soundness. Inasmuch as its ultimate dependence, direct or indirect, will naturally be upon library organizations throughout the country, the erection of a central endowment might reasonably run parallel with increasing direct financial support in exchange for tangible services rendered to member libraries.

## APPENDIX





*Library appropriations made by Andrew Carnegie and by the Carnegie Corporation  
1897-1923*

TABULAR LIST OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES  
IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA, 1896-1923

I

*Communities possessing public libraries of 1000 volumes or more in 1896*

II

*Communities possessing Carnegie library buildings in 1923*

III

*Communities of 1000 population or more in 1923 possessing public  
libraries unaided by Carnegie funds*

	I	II	III		I	II	III
Alabama		14	13	Ohio	29	77	80
Arizona	1	4	6	Oklahoma		24	44
Arkansas		4	22	Oregon		25	16
California	28	119	50	Pennsylvania	23	26	137
Colorado	6	26	18	Rhode Island	41		43
Connecticut	61	8	135	South Carolina	2	14	9
Delaware	2		10	South Dakota	1	25	17
District of Columbia		1		Tennessee	2	10	6
Florida	2	10	27	Texas	1	30	61
Georgia	1	20	20	Utah		23	15
Idaho		10	12	Vermont	24	4	106
Illinois	62	105	110	Virginia		2	27
Indiana	23	155	37	Washington	3	32	20
Iowa	23	99	51	West Virginia	1	3	10
Kansas	10	58	56	Wisconsin	34	60	74
Kentucky	1	15	28	Wyoming	1	16	1
Louisiana	1	4	6	UNITED STATES	971	1408	2465
Maine	31	17	131				
Maryland	3	1	20			II	III
Massachusetts	271	35	257	Alberta		3	1
Michigan	40	53	116	British Columbia		3	2
Minnesota	14	58	54	Manitoba		2	3
Mississippi	1	10	11	New Brunswick		1	4
Missouri	6	26	30	Nova Scotia			6
Montana	7	17	21	Ontario		103	59
Nebraska	11	68	42	Prince Edward Island			1
Nevada		1	1	Quebec			4
New Hampshire	76	9	75	Saskatchewan		2	6
New Jersey	19	29	150	Yukon		1	
New Mexico		3	8	Newfoundland			1
New York	106	41	218	CANADA		115	87
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North Dakota	1	8	22				







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